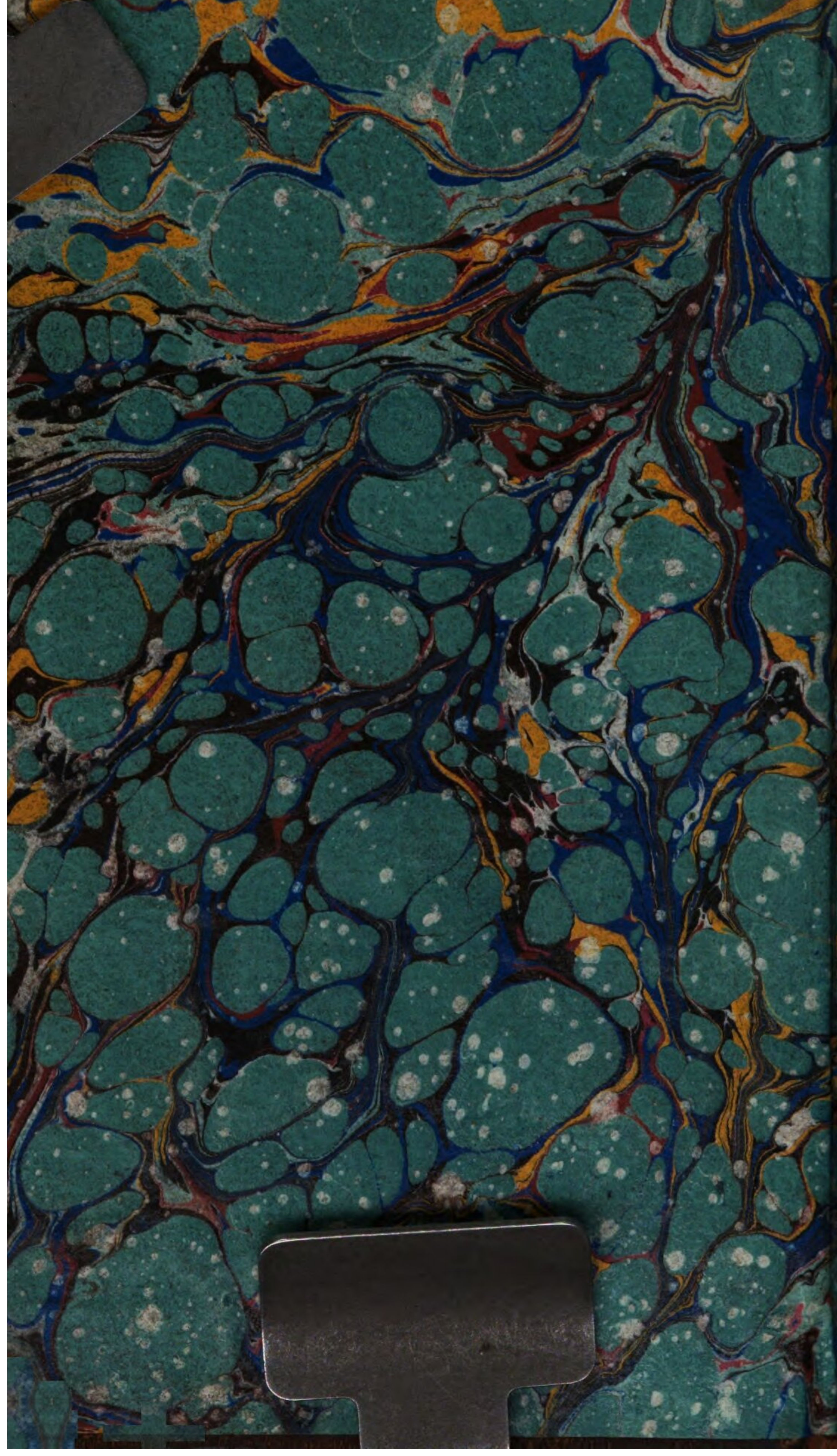
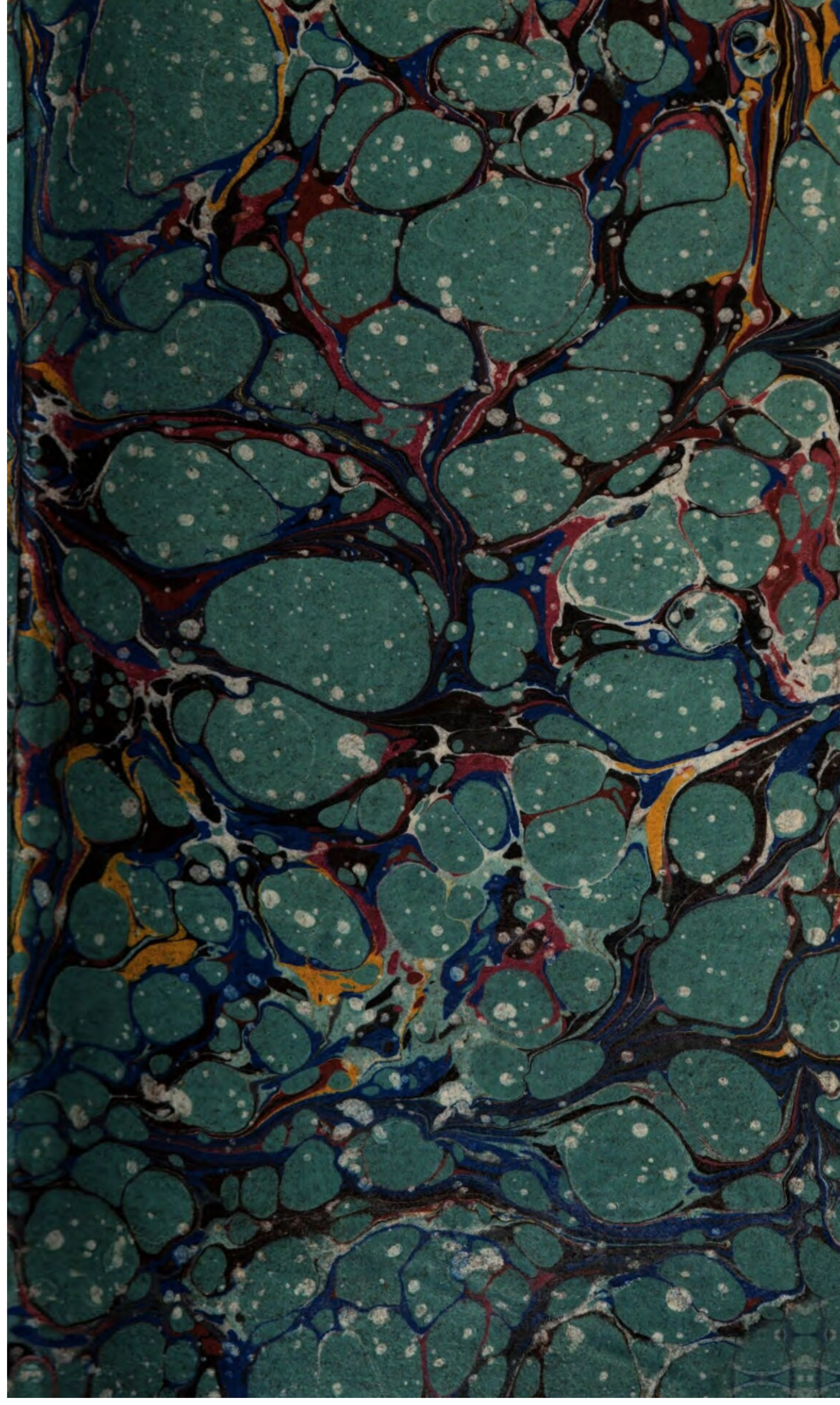














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Translated by  
ALEXANDER POPE, Esq;

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VOLUME THE FIRST.

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M. DCC. LXIII.



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M DCCC LXXXI.



A  
G E N E R A L V I E W  
O F T H E  
E P I C P O E M,  
A N D O F T H E  
I L I A D and O D Y S S E Y.

Extracted from B O S S U.

S E C T. I.

**T**HE fables of poets were originally employed in representing the Divine Nature \*, according to the notion then conceived of it. This sublime subject occasioned the first poets to be called divines, and poetry the language of the gods. They divided the divine attributes into so many persons; because the infirmity of a human mind cannot sufficiently conceive, or explain, so much power and action in a simplicity so great and indivisible as that of God. And perhaps they were also jealous of the advantages they reaped from such excellent and exalted learning, and of which they thought the vulgar part of mankind was not worthy.

They could not describe the operations of this almighty cause, without speaking at the same time of its effects: so that to divinity they added physiology, and

\* Of the nature of epic poetry.



treated of both, without quitting the umbrages of their allegorical expressions.

But man being the chief and most noble of all that God produced, and nothing being so proper, or more useful to poets than this subject; they added it to the former, and treated of the doctrine of morality after the same manner as they did that of divinity and philosophy: and from morality thus treated, is formed that kind of poem and fable which we call epic.

The poets did the same in morality, that the divines had done in divinity. But that infinite variety of the actions and operations of the divine nature (to which our understanding bears so small a proportion) did as it were force them upon dividing the single idea of the only one God into several persons, under the different names of Jupiter, Juno, Neptune, and the rest.

And on the other hand, the nature of moral philosophy being such, as never to treat of things in particular, but in general; the epic poets were obliged to unite in one single idea, in one and the same person, and in an action which appeared singular, all that looked like it in different persons, and in various actions; which might be thus contained as so many species under their genus.

The presence of the Deity, and the care such an august cause is to be supposed to take about any action, obliges the poet to represent this action as great, important, and managed by \* kings and princes. It obliges him likewise to think and speak in an elevated way above the vulgar, and in a style that may in some sort keep up the character of the divine persons he introduces. † To this end serve the poetical and figurative expression, and the majesty of the heroic verse.

But all this, being divine and surprising, may quite ruin all probability: therefore the poet should take a peculiar care as to that point, since his chief aim is to

\* *Res gestæ regumque ducumque.* HOR. Art. Poet.

† ————— *Cui mens diviniior atque os  
Magna sonaturum, des nominis hujus honorem.* HORAT.



instruct, and without probability any action is less likely to persuade.

Lastly, since precepts ought to be \* concise, to be the more easily conceived, and less oppress the memory; and since nothing can be more effectual to this end than proposing one single idea, and collecting all things so well together, as to be present to our minds all at once; therefore the poets have reduced all to one † single action, under one and the same design, and in a body whose members and parts should be homogeneous.

What we have observed of the nature of the epic poem, gives us a just idea of it, and we may define it thus :

“ The epic poem is a discourse invented by art, to  
 “ form the manners, by such instructions as are dis-  
 “ guised under the allegories of some one important  
 “ action, which is related in verse, after a probable,  
 “ diverting, and surprising manner.”

## S E C T. II.

‡ In every design which a man deliberately undertakes, the end he proposes is the first thing in his mind, and that by which he governs the whole work, and all its parts: thus since the end of the epic poem is to regulate the manners, it is with this first view the poet ought to begin.

But there is a great difference between the philosophical and the poetical doctrine of manners. The schoolmen content themselves with treating of virtues and vices in general: the instructions they give are proper for all states, people, and for all ages. But the poet has a nearer regard to his own country, and the necessities of his own nation. With this design he makes choice of some piece of morality, the most proper and

\* Quicquid præcipies esto brevis, ut citò dicta

Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles. HOR. Poet.

† Denique sit quodvis simplex duntaxat, & unum. Ibid.

‡ The fable of the Iliad.



just he can imagine: and in order to press this home, he makes less use of the force of reasoning, than of the power of insinuation; accommodating himself to the particular customs and inclinations of those, who are to be the subject, or the readers, of his work.

Let us now see how Homer has acquitted himself in these respects.

He saw the Grecians, for whom he designed his poem, were divided into as many states as they had capital cities. Each was a body politic apart, and had its form of government independent from all the rest. And yet these distinct states were very often obliged to unite together in one body against their common enemies. These were two very different sorts of government, such as could not be comprehended in one maxim of morality, and in one single poem.

The poet therefore has made two distinct fables of them. The one is for Greece in general, united into one body, but composed of parts independent on each other; and the other for each particular state, considered as they were in time of peace, without the former circumstances, and the necessity of being united.

As for the first sort of government, in the union, or rather in the confederacy, of many independent states; experience has always made it appear, “That nothing  
“so much causes success as a due subordination, and  
“a right understanding among the chief commanders.  
“And on the other hand, the inevitable ruin of such  
“confederacies proceeds from the heats, jealousies,  
“and ambition of the different leaders, and the dis-  
“contents of submitting to a single general.” All sorts of states, and in particular the Grecians, had dearly experienced this truth. So that the most useful and necessary instruction that could be given them, was, to lay before their eyes the loss which both the people and the princes must of necessity suffer, by the ambition, discord, and obstinacy of the latter.

Homer then has taken for the foundation of his fable this great truth; That a misunderstanding between princes is the ruin of their own states. “I sing (says  
“he) the anger of Achilles, so pernicious to the Gre-



“ cians, and the cause of so many heroes deaths, oc-  
 “ casioned by the discord and separation of Agamem-  
 “ non and that prince.”

But that this truth may be compleatly and fully known, there is need of a second to support it. It is necessary in such a design, not only to represent the confederate states at first disagreeing among themselves, and from thence unfortunate; but to show the same states afterwards reconciled and united, and of consequence victorious.

Let us now see how he has joined all these in one general action.

“ Several princes independent on one another were  
 “ united against a common enemy. The person whom  
 “ they had elected their general, offers an affront to  
 “ the most valiant of all the confederates. This of-  
 “ fended prince is so far provoked, as to relinquish  
 “ the union, and obstinately refuse to fight for the  
 “ common cause. This misunderstanding gives the  
 “ enemy such an advantage, that the allies are very  
 “ near quitting their design with dishonour. He him-  
 “ self who made the separation, is not exempt from  
 “ sharing the misfortune which he brought upon his  
 “ party. For having permitted his intimate friend to  
 “ succour them in a great necessity, this friend is killed  
 “ by the enemy’s general. Thus the contending  
 “ princes being both made wiser at their own cost,  
 “ are reconciled, and unite again: then this valiant  
 “ prince not only obtains the victory in the public  
 “ cause, but revenges his private wrongs, by killing  
 “ with his own hands the author of the death of his  
 “ friend.”

This is the first platform of the poem, and the fiction which reduces into one important and universal action all the particulars upon which it turns.

In the next place it must be rendered probable by the circumstances of times, places, and persons: some persons must be found out, already known by history or otherwise, whom we may with probability make the actors and personages of this fable. Homer has made choice of the siege of Troy, and feigned that this ac-



tion happened there. To a phantom of his brain, whom he would paint valiant and choleric, he has given the name of Achilles; that of Agamemnon to his general; that of Hector to the enemy's commander; and so to the rest.

Besides, he was obliged to accommodate himself to the manners, customs, and genius of the Greeks his auditors, the better to make them attend to the instruction of his poem, and to gain their approbation by praising them: so that they might the better forgive him the representation of their own faults in some of his chief personages. He admirably discharges all these duties, by making these brave princes and those victorious people all Grecians, and the fathers of those he had a mind to commend.

But not being content, in a work of such a length, to propose only the principal point of the moral, and to fill up the rest with useless ornaments and foreign incidents, he extends this moral by all its necessary consequences. As for instance in the subject before us, it is not enough to know, that a good understanding ought always to be maintained among confederates: it is likewise of equal importance, that if there happens any division, care must be taken to keep it secret from the enemy, that their ignorance of this advantage may prevent their making use of it. And in the second place, when their concord is but counterfeit and only in appearance, one should never press the enemy too closely; for this would discover the weakness which we ought to conceal from them.

The episode of Patroclus most admirably furnishes us with these two instructions. For when he appeared in the arms of Achilles, the Trojans, who took him for that prince now reconciled and united to the confederates, immediately gave ground, and quitted the advantages they had before over the Greeks. But Patroclus, who should have been contented with this success, presses upon Hector too boldly, and by obliging him to fight, soon discovers that it was not the true Achilles who was clad in his armour, but a hero of much inferior prowess. So that Hector kills him, and



regains those advantages which the Trojans had lost, on the opinion that Achilles was reconciled.

### S E C T. III.

\* The Odyſſey was not deſigned, like the Iliad, for the inſtruction of all the ſtates of Greece joined in one body, but for each ſtate in particular. As a ſtate is compoſed of two parts; the head which commands, and the members which obey; there are inſtructions requiſite to both, to teach the one to govern, and the others to ſubmit to government.

There are two virtues neceſſary to one in authority, prudence to order, and care to ſee his orders put in execution. The prudence of a politician is not acquired but by a long experience in all ſorts of buſineſs, and by an acquaintance with all the different forms of governments and ſtates. The care of the adminiſtration ſuffers not him that has the government to rely upon others, but requires his own preſence: and kings who are abſent from their ſtates, are in danger of loſing them, and give occaſion to great diſorders and confuſion.

Theſe two points may be eaſily united in one and the ſame man. “ A king forſakes his kingdom to  
“ viſit the courts of ſeveral princes, where he learns  
“ the manners and cuſtoms of different nations. From  
“ hence there naturally ariſes a vaſt number of inci-  
“ dents, of dangers, and of adventures, very uſeful  
“ for a political inſtitution. On the other ſide, this  
“ abſence gives way to the diſorders which happen in  
“ his own kingdom, and which end not till his return,  
“ whoſe preſence only can re-eſtabliſh all things.”  
Thus the abſence of a king has the ſame effects in this fable, as the diviſion of the princes had in the former.

The ſubjects have ſcarce any need but of one general maxim, which is, To ſuffer themſelves to be governed, and to obey faithfully; whatever reaſon they may imagine againſt the orders they receive. It is eaſy

\* The fable of the Odyſſey.



\* A VIEW of the E P I C P O E M,

to join this instruction with the other, by bestowing on this wise and industrious prince such subjects, as in his absence would rather follow their own judgment than his commands ; and by demonstrating the misfortunes which this disobedience draws upon them, the evil consequences which almost infallibly attend these particular notions, which are intirely different from the general idea of him who ought to govern.

But as it was necessary that the princes in the Iliad should be choleric and quarrelsome, so it is necessary in the fable of the Odyssy that the chief person should be sage and prudent. This raises a difficulty in the fiction ; because this person ought to be absent for the two reasons aforementioned, which are essential to the fable, and which constitute the principal aim of it : but he cannot absent himself, without offending against another maxim of equal importance, viz. That a king should upon no account leave his country.

It is true, there are sometimes such necessities as sufficiently excuse the prudence of a politician in this point. But such a necessity is a thing important enough of itself to supply matter for another poem, and this multiplication of the action would be vicious. To prevent which, in the first place, this necessity, and the departure of the hero must be disjoined from the poem ; and in the second place, the hero having been obliged to absent himself, for a reason antecedent to the action and placed distinct from the fable, he ought not so far to embrace this opportunity of instructing himself, as to absent himself voluntarily from his own government. For at this rate, his absence would be merely voluntary, and one might with reason lay to his charge all the disorders which might arise.

Thus in the constitution of the fable he ought not to take for his action, and for the foundation of his poem, the departure of a prince from his own country, nor his voluntary stay in any other place ; but his return, and this return retarded against his will. This is the first idea Homer gives us of it. \* His hero appears at

\* Odyssy v.



first in a desolate island, sitting upon the side of the sea, which with tears in his eyes he looks upon as the obstacle that had so long opposed his return, and detained him from revisiting his own dear country.

And lastly, since this forced delay might more naturally and usually happen to such as make voyages by sea; Homer has judiciously made choice of a prince whose kingdom was in an island.

Let us see then how he has feigned all this action, making his hero a person in years, because years are requisite to instruct a man in prudence and policy.

“ A prince had been obliged to forsake his native  
 “ country, and to head an army of his subjects in a  
 “ foreign expedition. Having gloriously performed  
 “ this enterprize, he was marching home again, and  
 “ conducting his subjects to his own state. But spite  
 “ of all the attempts, with which the eagerness to re-  
 “ turn had inspired him, he was stopt by the way by  
 “ tempests for several years, and cast upon several  
 “ countries differing from each other in manners and  
 “ government. In these dangers his companions not  
 “ always following his orders, perish through their  
 “ own fault. The grandees of his country strangely  
 “ abuse his absence, and raise no small disorders at  
 “ home. They consume his estate, conspire to de-  
 “ stroy his son, would constrain his queen to accept of  
 “ one of them for her husband; and indulge them-  
 “ selves in all violence, so much the more, because  
 “ they were persuaded he would never return. But at  
 “ last he returns, and discovering himself only to his  
 “ son, and some others, who had continued firm to  
 “ him, he is an eye-witness of the insolence of his  
 “ enemies, punishes them according to their deserts,  
 “ and restores to his island that tranquillity and repose  
 “ to which they had been strangers during his ab-  
 “ sence.”

As the truth, which serves for foundation to this fiction, is, that the absence of a person from his own home, or his neglect of his own affairs, is the cause of great disorders: so the principal point of the action, and the most essential one, is the absence of the hero.



This fills almost all the poem : for not only this real absence lasted several years, but even when the hero returned, he does not discover himself ; and this prudent disguise, from whence he reaped so much advantage, has the same effect upon the authors of the disorders, and all others who knew him not, as his real absence had before, so that he is absent as to them, till the very moment of their punishment.

After the poet had thus composed his fable, and joined the fiction to the truth, he then makes choice of Ulysses, the king of the isle of Ithaca, to maintain the character of his chief personage, and bestowed the rest upon Telemachus, Penelope, Antinous, and others, whom he calls by what names he pleases.

I shall not here insist upon the many excellent advices, which are so many parts and natural consequences of the fundamental truth ; and which the poet very dextrously lays down in those fictions which are the episodes and members of the entire action. Such for instance are these advices : not to intrude one's self into the mysteries of government, which the prince keeps secret : this is represented to us by the winds shut up in a bull-hide, which the miserable companions of Ulysses would needs be so foolish as to pry into. Not to suffer one's self to be led away by the seeming charms of an idle and inactive life, to which the Sirens Song invited \*. Not to suffer one's self to be sensualised by pleasures, like those who were changed into brutes by Circe : and a great many other points of morality necessary for all sorts of people.

This poem is more useful to the people than the Iliad, where the subjects suffer rather by the ill conduct of their princes, than through their own miscarriages. But in the Odyssey, it is not the fault of Ulysses that is the ruin of his subjects. This wise prince leaves untried no method to make them partakers of the benefit of his return. Thus the poet in the Iliad says, “ He  
“ sings the anger of Achilles, which had caused the  
“ death of so many Grecians ;” and on the contrary,

\* *Improba Siren desidia.* HORAT.



in the \* Odyſſey he tells his Readers, “ That the ſub-  
“ jects periſhed through their own fault.”

#### S E C T. IV.

† Ariſtotle beſtows great encomiums upon Homer for the ſimplicity of his deſign, becauſe he has included in one ſingle part all that happened at the ſiege of Troy. And to this he oppoſes the ignorance of ſome poets, who imagined that the unity of the fable or action was ſufficiently preſerved by the unity of the hero; and who compoſed their Theſeids, Heracleids, and the like, wherein they only heaped up in one poem every thing that happened to one perſonage.

He finds fault with thoſe poets who were for reducing the unity of the fable into the unity of the hero, becauſe one man may have performed ſeveral adventures, which it is impoſſible to reduce under any one general and ſimple head. This reducing of all things to unity and ſimplicity is what Horace likewiſe makes his firſt rule.

“ Denique ſit quodvis ſimplex duntaxat, & unum.”

According to theſe rules, it will be allowable to make uſe of ſeveral fables; (or to ſpeak more correctly) of ſeveral incidents which may be divided into ſeveral fables; provided they are ſo ordered, that the unity of the fable be not ſpoiled. This liberty is ſtill greater in the epic poem, becauſe it is of a larger extent, and ought to be entire and compleat.

I will explain myſelf more diſtinctly by the practice of Homer.

No doubt but one might make four diſtinct fables out of theſe four following inſtructions.

1. Diviſion between thoſe of the ſame party expoſes them entirely to their enemies.

2. Conceal your weakneſs, and you will be dreaded as much as if you had none of thoſe imperfections, of which they are ignorant.

\* Αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο. Odyſſ. i.

† Of the unity of the fable.



3. When your strength is only feigned, and founded only in the opinion of others; never venture so far as if your strength was real.

4. The more you agree together, the less hurt can your enemies do you.

It is plain, I say, that each of these particular maxims might serve for the ground-work of a fiction, and one might make four distinct fables out of them. May not one then put all these into one single Epopea? Not unless one single fable can be made out of all. The poet indeed may have so much skill as to unite all into one body, as members and parts, each of which taken afunder would be imperfect; and if he joins them so, this conjunction shall be no hindrance at all to the unity and the regular simplicity of the fable. This is what Homer has done with such success in the composition of the Iliad.

1. The division between Achilles and his allies tended to the ruin of their designs. 2. Patroclus comes to their relief in the armour of this hero, and Hector retreats. 3. But this young man pushing the advantage which his disguise gave him too far, ventures to engage with Hector himself; but not being master of Achilles's strength (whom he only represented in outward appearance) he is killed, and by this means leaves the Grecian affairs in the same disorder, from which in that disguise he came to free them. 4. Achilles provoked at the death of his friend, is reconciled, and revenges his loss by the death of Hector. These various incidents being thus united, do not make different actions and fables, but are only the uncompleat and unfinished parts of one and the same action and fable, which alone when taken thus complexly, can be said to be compleat and entire: and all these maxims of the moral, are easily reduced into these two parts, which in my opinion cannot be separated without enervating the force of both. The two parts are these, \* That a right understanding is the preservation, and discord the destruction of states.

\* *Concordiâ res parvæ crescunt: discordiâ magnæ dilabuntur.*  
SALLUST. de bello Jug.



Though then the poet has made use of two parts in his poems, each of which might have served for a fable, as we have observed: yet this multiplication cannot be called a vicious and irregular Polymythia, contrary to the necessary unity and simplicity of the fable; but it gives the fable another qualification, altogether necessary and regular, namely its perfection and finishing stroke.

## S E C T. V.

\* The action of a poem is the subject which the poet undertakes, proposes, and builds upon. So that the moral and the instructions which are the end of the epic poem, are not the matter of it. Those the poets leave in their allegorical and figurative obscurity. They only give notice at the exordium, that they sing some action. The revenge of Achilles, the return of Ulysses, &c.

Since then the action is the matter of a fable, it is evident that whatever incidents are essential to the fable, or constitute a part of it, are necessary also to the action, and are parts of the epic matter, none of which ought to be omitted. Such, for instance, are the contention of Agamemnon and Achilles, the slaughter Hector makes in the Grecian army, the re-union of the Greek princes; and lastly, the re-settlement and victory which was the consequence of that re-union.

There are four qualifications in the epic action: the first is its unity, the second its integrity, the third its importance, the fourth its duration.

The unity of the epic action, as well as the unity of the fable, does not consist either in the unity of the hero, or in the unity of time: three things I suppose are necessary to it. The first is, to make use of no episode but what arises from the very platform and foundation of the action, and is as it were a natural member of the body. The second is, exactly to unite these episodes and these members with one another. And the third is, never to finish any episode so as it may seem

\* Of the action of the epic poem,



to be an entire action; but to let each episode still appear in its own particular nature, as the member of a body, and as a part of itself not compleat.

\* Aristotle not only says that the epic action should be one, but adds, that it should be entire, perfect, and compleat, and for this purpose ought to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. These three parts of a whole are too generally and universally denoted by the words beginning, middle, and end; we may interpret them more precisely, and say, That the causes and designs of an action are the beginning: that the effects of these causes, and the difficulties that are met with in the execution of these designs, are the middle; and that the unravelling and resolution of these difficulties are the end.

† Homer's design in the Iliad is to relate the anger and revenge of Achilles. The beginning of this action is the change of Achilles from a calm to a passionate temper. The middle is the effects of his passion, and all the illustrious deaths it is the cause of. The end of this same action is the return of Achilles to his calmness of temper again. All was quiet in the Grecian camp, when Agamemnon their general provokes Apollo against them, whom he was willing to appease afterwards at the cost and prejudice of Achilles, who had no part in his fault. This then is an exact beginning: it supposes nothing before, and requires after it the effects of this anger. Achilles revenges himself, and that is an exact middle; it supposes before it the anger of Achilles, this revenge is the effect of it. Then this middle requires after it the effects of this revenge, which is the satisfaction of Achilles: for the revenge had not been compleat, unless Achilles had been satisfied. By this means the poet makes his hero, after he was glutted by the mischief he had done to Agamemnon, by the death of Hector, and the honour he did his friend, by insulting over his murderer; he makes him, I say, to be moved by the tears and misfortunes of king Priam. We see him as calm at the end of the poem, during the

\* Of the beginning, middle, and end of the action.

† The action of the Iliad.



funeral of Hector, as he was at the beginning of the poem, whilst the plague raged among the Grecians. This end is just, since the calmness of temper Achilles re-enjoyed, is only an effect of the revenge which ought to have preceded : and after this nobody expects any more of his anger. Thus has Homer been very exact in the beginning, middle, and end of the action he made choice of for the subject of his Iliad.

\* His design in the Odyssæy was to describe the return of Ulysses from the siege of Troy, and his arrival at Ithaca. He opens this poem with the complaints of Minerva against Neptune, who opposed the return of this hero, and against Calypso, who detained him in an island from Ithaca. Is this a beginning ? No ; doubtless, the reader would know why Neptune is displeased with Ulysses, and how this prince came to be with Calypso ? He would know how he came from Troy thither ? The poet answers his demands out of the mouth of Ulysses himself, who relates these things, and begins the action, by the recital of his travels from the city of Troy. It signifies little whether the beginning of the action be the beginning of the poem. The beginning of this action is that which happens to Ulysses, when upon his leaving Troy he bends his course for Ithaca. The middle comprehends all the misfortunes he endured, and all the disorders of his own government. The end is the re-instating of the hero in the peaceable possession of his kingdom, where he was acknowledged by his son, his wife, his father, and several others. The poet was sensible he should have ended ill, had he gone no farther than the death of these princes, who were the rivals and enemies of Ulysses, because the reader might have looked for some revenge which the subjects of these princes might have taken, on him who had killed their sovereigns : but this danger over, and the people vanquished and quieted, there was nothing more to be expected. The poem and the action have all their parts, and no more.

\* The action of the Odyssæy.



But the order of the *Odyſſey* differs from that of the *Iliad*, in that the poem does not begin with the beginning of the action.

\* The cauſes of the action are alſo what the poet is obliged to give an account of. There are three ſorts of cauſes, the humours, the intereſts, and the deſigns of men; and theſe different cauſes of an action are likewiſe often the cauſes of one another, every man taking up thoſe intereſts in which his humour engages him, and forming thoſe deſigns to which his humour and intereſt incline him. Of all theſe the poet ought to inform his readers, and render them conſpicuous in his principal perſonages.

Homer has ingeniouſly begun his *Odyſſey* with the tranſactions at Ithaca, during the abſence of Ulyſſes. If he had begun with the travels of his hero, he would ſcarce have ſpoken of any one elſe, and a man might have read a great deal of the poem, without conceiving the leaſt idea of Telemachus, Penelope, or her ſuitors, who had ſo great a ſhare in the action; but in the beginning he has pitched upon, beſides theſe perſonages whom he diſcovers, he repreſents Ulyſſes in his full length, and from the very firſt opening one ſees the intereſt which the gods take in the action.

The ſkill and care of the ſame poet may be ſeen likewiſe in inducing his perſonages in the firſt book of his *Iliad*, where he diſcovers the humours, the intereſts, and the deſigns of Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector, Ulyſſes, and ſeveral others, and even of the deities. And in his ſecond he makes a review of the Grecian and Trojan armies, which is full evidence, that all we have here ſaid is very neceſſary.

† As theſe cauſes are the beginning of the action, the oppoſite deſigns againſt that of the hero are the middle of it, and form that difficulty or intrigue, which makes up the greateſt part of the poem; the ſolution or unravelling commences when the reader begins to ſee that difficulty removed, and the doubts cleared up. Homer has divided each of his poems into two parts, and

\* Of the cauſes and beginning of the action,

† Of the middle or intrigue of the action.



has put a particular intrigue, and the solution of it, into each part.

The first part of the Iliad is the anger of Achilles, who is for revenging himself upon Agamemnon by the means of Hector and the Trojans. The intrigue comprehends the three days fight which happened in the absence of Achilles: and it consists on one side in the resistance of Agamemnon and the Grecians: and on the other, in the revengeful and inexorable humour of Achilles, which would not suffer him to be reconciled. The loss of the Grecians, and the despair of Agamemnon, prepare for a solution, by the satisfaction which the incensed hero received from it. The death of Patroclus joined to the offers of Agamemnon, which of itself had proved ineffectual, remove this difficulty, and make the unravelling of the first part.

This death is likewise the beginning of the second part; since it puts Achilles upon the design of revenging himself on Hector. But the design of Hector is opposite to that of Achilles: this Trojan is valiant, and resolved to stand on his own defence. This valour and resolution of Hector, are on his part the cause of the intrigue. All the endeavours Achilles used to meet with Hector and be the death of him; and the contrary endeavours of the Trojan to keep out of his reach, and defend himself, are the intrigue; which comprehends the battle of the last day. The unravelling begins at the death of Hector; and besides that, it contains the insulting of Achilles over his body, the honours he paid to Patroclus, and the intreaties of king Priam. The regrets of this king and the other Trojans, in the sorrowful obsequies they paid to Hector's body, end the unravelling; they justify the satisfaction of Achilles, and demonstrate his tranquillity.

The first part of the Odyssey is the return of Ulysses into Ithaca. Neptune opposes it by raising tempests, and this makes the intrigue. The unravelling is the arrival of Ulysses upon his own island, where Neptune could offer him no farther injury. The second part is the re-instituting this hero in his own government. The princes that are his rivals oppose him, and this is a fresh



intrigue : the solution of it begins at their deaths, and is compleated as soon as the Ithacans were appeased.

These two parts in the *Odyſſey* have not one common intrigue. The anger of Achilles forms both the intrigues in the *Iliad* ; and it is ſo far the matter of this *Épopea*, that the very beginning and end of this poem depend on the beginning and end of this anger. But let the deſire Achilles had to revenge himſelf, and the deſire Ulyſſes had to return to his own country, be never ſo near allied, yet we cannot place them under one and the ſame notion : for that deſire of Ulyſſes is not a paſſion that begins and ends in the poem with the action : it is a natural habit : nor does the poet propoſe it for his ſubject, as he does the anger of Achilles.

We have already obſerved what is meant by the intrigue, and the unravelling thereof ; let us now ſay ſomething of the manner of forming both. Theſe two ſhould ariſe naturally out of the very eſſence and ſubject of the poem, and are to be deduced from thence. Their conduct is ſo exact and natural, that it ſeems as if their action had preſented them with whatever they inſerted, without putting themſelves to the trouble of a farther enquiry.

What is more uſual and natural to warriors, than anger, heat, paſſion, and impatience of bearing the leaſt affront or diſreſpect ? This is what forms the intrigue of the *Iliad* ; and every thing we read there is nothing elſe but the effect of this humour and theſe paſſions.

What more natural and uſual obſtacle to thoſe who take voyages, than the ſea, the winds, and the ſtorms ? Homer makes this the intrigue of the firſt part of the *Odyſſey* : and for the ſecond, he makes uſe of almoſt the infallible effect of the long abſence of a maſter, whoſe return is quite deſpaired of, -viz. the inſolence of his ſervants and neighbours, the danger of his ſon and wife, and the ſequeſtration of his eſtate. Beſides, an abſence of almoſt twenty years, and the inſupportable fatigues joined to the age of which Ulyſſes then was, might induce him to believe that he ſhould not be owned by thoſe who thought him dead, and whoſe in-



terest it was to have him really so. Therefore if he had presently declared who he was, and had called himself Ulysses, they would easily have destroyed him as an impostor, before he had an opportunity to make himself known.

There could be nothing more natural nor more necessary than this ingenious disguise, to which the advantages his enemies had taken of his absence had reduced him, and to which his long misfortunes had inured him. This allowed him an opportunity, without hazarding any thing, of taking the best measures he could, against those persons who could not so much as mistrust any harm from him. This way was afforded him, by the very nature of his action, to execute his designs, and overcome the obstacles it cast before him. And it is this contest between the prudence and the dissimulation of a single man on one hand, and the ungovernable insolence of so many rivals on the other, which constitutes the intrigue of the second part of the *Odyssey*.

\* If the plot or intrigue must be natural, and such as springs from the very subject, as has been already urged; then the winding-up of the plot, by a more sure claim, must have this qualification, and be a probable consequence of all that went before. As this is what the readers regard more than the rest, so should the poet be more exact in it. This is the end of the poem, and the last impression that is to be stamped upon them.

We shall find this in the *Odyssey*. Ulysses by a tempest is cast upon the island of the Phæacians, to whom he discovers himself, and desires they would favour his return to his own country, which was not very far distant. One cannot see any reason why the king of this island should refuse such a reasonable request, to a hero whom he seemed to have in great esteem. The Phæacians indeed had heard him tell the story of his adventures; and in this fabulous recital consisted all the advantage that he could derive from his presence; for the

\* Of the end or unravelling of the action.



art of war which they admired in him, his undauntedness under dangers, his indefatigable patience, and other virtues, were such as these islanders were not used to. All their talent lay in singing and dancing, and whatsoever was charming in a quiet life. And here we see how dextrously Homer prepares the incidents he makes use of. These people could do no less, for the account with which Ulysses had so much entertained them, than afford him a ship and a safe convoy, which was of little expence or trouble to them.

When he arrived, his long absence, and the travels which had disfigured him, made him altogether unknown; and the danger he would have incurred, had he discovered himself too soon, forced him to a disguise: lastly, this disguise gave him an opportunity of surprising those young suitors, who for several years together had been accustomed to nothing but to sleep well, and fare daintily.

It was from these examples that Aristotle drew this rule, that “ Whatever concludes the poem should so “ spring from the very constitution of the fable, as if “ it were a necessary, or at least a probable consequence.”

## S E C T. VI.

\* The time of the epic action is not fixed, like that of the dramatic poem: it is much longer; for an uninterrupted duration is much more necessary in an action which one sees and is present at, than in one which we only read or hear repeated. Besides tragedy is fuller of passion, and consequently of such a violence as cannot admit of so long a duration.

The Iliad containing an action of anger and violence, the poet allows it but a short time, about forty days. The design of the Odyssey required another conduct; the character of the hero is prudence and long-suffering; therefore the time of its duration is much longer, above eight years.

\* The time of the action.



\* The passions of tragedy are different from those of the epic poem. In the former, terror and pity have the chief place; the passion that seems most peculiar to epic poetry, is admiration.

Besides this admiration, which in general distinguishes the epic poem from the dramatic; each epic poem has likewise some peculiar passion, which distinguishes it in particular from other epic poems, and constitutes a kind of singular and individual difference between these poems of the same species. These singular passions correspond to the character of the hero. Anger and terror reign throughout the Iliad, because Achilles is angry, and the most terrible of all men. The Æneid has all the soft and tender passions, because that is the character of Æneas. The prudence, wisdom, and constancy of Ulysses do not allow him either of these extremes, therefore the poet does not permit one of them to be predominant in the Odyssey. He confines himself to admiration only, which he carries to an higher pitch than in the Iliad: and it is upon this account that he introduces a great many more machines in the Odyssey, into the body of the action, than are to be seen in the actions of the other two poems.

† The manners of the epic poem ought to be poetically good, but it is not necessary they be always morally so. They are poetically good, when one may discover the virtue or vice, the good or ill inclinations, of every one who speaks or acts: they are poetically bad, when persons are made to speak or act out of character, or inconsistently or unequally. The manners of Æneas and of Mezentius are equally good, considered poetically, because they equally demonstrate the piety of the one, and the impiety of the other.

‡ It is requisite to make the same distinction between a hero in morality, and a hero in poetry, as between moral and poetical goodness. Achilles had as much right to the latter as Æneas. Aristotle says, that the hero of a poem should be neither good nor bad; neither advanced above the rest of mankind by his virtues,

\* The passions of the epic poem.

† The manners.

‡ Character of the hero.



or sink beneath them by his vices; that he may be the proper and fuller example to others, both what to imitate and what to decline.

The other qualifications of the manners are, that they be suitable to the causes which either raise or discover them in the persons; that they have an exact resemblance to what history, or fable, have delivered of those persons, to whom they are ascribed; and that there be an equality in them, so that no man is made to act, or speak, out of his character.

\* But this equality is not sufficient for the unity of the character; it is further necessary, that the same spirit appear in all sort of encounters. Thus *Æneas* acting with great piety and mildness in the first part of the *Æneid*, which requires no other character; and afterwards appearing illustrious in heroic valour, in the wars of the second part; but there, without any appearance either of a hard or a soft disposition; would, doubtless, be far from offending against the equality of the manners: but yet there would be no simplicity or unity in the character. So that, besides the qualities that claim their particular place upon different occasions, there must be one appearing throughout, which commands over all the rest; and without this, we may affirm, it is no character.

One may indeed make a hero as valiant as *Achilles*, as pious as *Æneas*, and as prudent as *Ulysses*. But it is a meer chimæra to imagine a hero that has the valour of *Achilles*, the piety of *Æneas*, and the prudence of *Ulysses*, at one and the same time. This vision might happen to an author, who would suit the character of a hero to whatever each part of the action might naturally require, without regarding the essence of the fable, or the unity of the character in the same person upon all sorts of occasions: this hero would be the mildest, best-natured prince in the world, and also the most cholerick, hard-hearted, and implacable creature imaginable; he would be extremely tender like *Æneas*, extremely violent like *Achilles*, and yet have the indif-

\* Unity of the character.



ference of Ulysses, that is incapable of the two extremes. Would it not be in vain for the poet to call this person by the same name throughout?

Let us reflect on the effects it would produce in several poems, whose authors were of opinion, that the chief character of a hero is that of an accomplished man. They would be all alike; all valiant in battle, prudent in council, pious in the acts of religion, courteous, civil, magnificent; and, lastly, endued with all the prodigious virtues, any poet could invent. All this would be independent of the action and the subject of the poem; and, upon seeing each hero separated from the rest of the work, we should not easily guess to what action, and to what poem, the hero belonged. So that we should see, that none of those would have a character; since the character is that which makes a person discernible, and which distinguishes him from all others.

This commanding quality in Achilles, is his anger; in Ulysses the art of dissimulation; in Æneas meekness. Each of these may be stiled, by way of eminence, the character in these heroes.

But these characters cannot be alone. It is absolutely necessary that some other should give them a lustre, and embellish them as far as they are capable: either by hiding the defects that are in each, by some noble and shining qualities; as the poet has done the anger of Achilles, by shading it with extraordinary valour: or by making them entirely of the nature of a true and solid virtue, as is to be observed in the two others. The dissimulation of Ulysses is a part of his prudence; and the meekness of Æneas is wholly employed in submitting his will to the gods. For the making up this union, our poets have joined together such qualities as are by nature the most compatible; valour with anger, meekness with piety, and prudence with dissimulation. This last union was necessary for the goodness of Ulysses; for without that, his dissimulation might have degenerated into wickedness and double-dealing.



## S E C T. VII.

\* We come now to the machines of the epic poem. The chief passion which it aims to excite being admiration, nothing is so conducive to that as the marvellous; and the importance and dignity of the action is by nothing so greatly elevated as by the care and interposition of heaven.

The machines are of three sorts. Some are theological, and were invented to explain the nature of the gods. Others are physical, and represent the things of nature. The last are moral, and are the images of virtues and vices.

Homer and the antients have given to their deities the manners, passions, and vices of men. Their poems are wholly allegorical; and in this view it is easier to defend Homer, than to blame him. We cannot accuse him for making mention of many gods, for his bestowing passions upon them, or even introducing them fighting against men. The Scripture uses the like figures and expressions.

If it be allowable to speak thus of the gods in theology, much more in the fictions of natural philosophy, where, if a poet describes the deities, he must give them such manners, speeches, and actions, as are conformable to the nature of the things they represent under those divinities. The case is the same in the morals of the deities: Minerva is wise because she represents prudence; Venus is both good or bad, because the passion of love is capable of these contrary qualities.

Since among the gods of a poem some are good, some bad, and some indifferently either; and since of our passions we make so many allegorical deities; we may attribute to the gods all that is done in the poem, whether good or evil. But these deities do not act constantly in one and the same manner.

Sometimes they act invisibly, and by meer inspiration; which has nothing in it extraordinary or mira-

\* Of the machinery.



culous : being no more than what we say every day, “ That some god has assisted us, or some dæmon has “ instigated us.”

At other times they appear visibly, and manifest themselves to men, in a manner altogether miraculous and præternatural.

The third way has something of both the others ; it is in truth a miracle, but is not commonly so accounted : this includes dreams, oracles, &c.

All these ways must be probable ; for however necessary the marvellous is to the epic action, as nothing is so conducive to admiration ; yet we can, on the other hand, admire nothing, that we think impossible. Though the probability of these machines be of a very large extent (since it is founded upon divine power) it is not without limitations. There are numerous instances of allowable and probable machines in the epic poem, where the gods are no less actors than the men. But the less credible sort, such as metamorphoses, &c. are far more rare.

This suggests a reflection on the method of rendering those machines probable, which in their own nature are hardly so. Those which require only divine probability, should be so disengaged from the action, that one might subtract them from it, without destroying the action. But those which are essential and necessary, should be grounded upon human probability, and not on the sole power of God. Thus the episodes of Circe, the Syrens, Polyphemus, &c. are necessary to the action of the Odyssey, and yet not humanly probable : yet Homer has artificially reduced them to human probability, by the simplicity and ignorance of the Phæacians, before whom he causes those recitals to be made.

The next question is, Where, and on what occasions machines may be used ? It is certain Homer and Virgil make use of them every where, and scarce suffer any action to be performed without them. Petronius makes this a precept : “ Per ambages, deorumque ministeria, “ &c.” The gods are mentioned in the very proposition of their works, the invocation is addrest to them,



and the whole narration is full of them. The gods are the causes of the action, they form the intrigue, and bring about the solution. The precept of Aristotle and Horace, that the unravelling of the plot should not proceed from a miracle, or the appearance of a god, has place only in dramatic poetry, not in the epic. For it is plain, that both in the solution of the Iliad and Odyssey, the gods are concerned: in the former, the deities meet to appease the anger of Achilles: Iris and Mercury are sent to that purpose, and Minerva eminently assists Achilles in the decisive combat with Hector. In the Odyssey, the same goddess fights close by Ulysses against the suitors, and concludes that peace betwixt him and the Ithacensians, which compleats the poem.

We may therefore determine, that a machine is not an invention to extricate the poet out of any difficulty which embarrasses him: but that the presence of a divinity, and some action surprising and extraordinary, are inserted into almost all the parts of his work, in order to render it more majestic and more admirable. But this mixture ought to be so made, that the machines might be retrenched, without taking any thing from the action: at the same time that it gives the readers a lesson of piety and virtue; and teaches them, that the most brave and the most wise can do nothing, and attain nothing great and glorious, without the assistance of heaven. Thus the machinery crowns the whole work, and renders it at once, marvellous, probable, and moral.



# T H E O D Y S S E Y.

## B O O K I.

### T H E A R G U M E N T.

Minerva's descent to Ithaca.

*The poem opens within forty-eight days of the arrival of Ulysses in his dominions. He had now remained seven years in the island of Calypso, when the gods assembled in council proposed the method of his departure from thence, and his return to his native country. For this purpose it is concluded to send Mercury to Calypso, and Pallas immediately descends to Ithaca. She holds a conference with Telemachus, in the shape of Mentis king of the Taphians; in which she advises him to take a journey in quest of his father Ulysses, to Pylos and Sparta, where Nestor and Menelaus yet reigned; then, after having visibly displayed her divinity, disappears. The suitors of Penelope make great entertainments, and riot in her palace till night. Phemius sings to them the return of the Grecians, till Penelope puts a stop to the song. Some words arise between the suitors and Telemachus, who summons the council to meet the day following.*

**T**H E man, for wisdom's various arts renown'd,  
Long exercis'd in woes, oh muse! resound.  
Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall  
Of sacred Troy, and raz'd her heav'n-built wall,

We shall proceed in the same method through the course of these annotations upon the Odyssy, as those in the Iliad; considering Homer chiefly as a poet, endeavouring to make his beauties understood, and not to praise without a reason given. It is equally an extreme, on the one hand to think Homer has no human defects;



Wand'ring from clime to clime, observant stray'd, 5  
 Their manners noted, and their states survey'd.

and on the other to dwell so much upon these defects, as to depreciate his beauties. The greater part of critics form a general character, from the observation of particular errors, taken in their own oblique or imperfect views; which is as unjust, as to make a judgment of the beauty of a man's body from the shadow it happens to cast, in such or such a position. To convince the reader of this intended impartiality, we readily allow the *Odyssey* to be inferior to the *Iliad* in many respects. It has not that sublimity of spirit, or that enthusiasm of poetry; but then it must be allowed, if it be less noble, it is more instructive: the other abounds with more heroism, this with more morality. The *Iliad* gives us a draught of gods and heroes, of discord, of contentions, and scenes of slaughter; the *Odyssey* sets before us a scene more amiable, the landscapes of nature; the pleasures of private life, the duties of every station, the hospitality of antient times; a less busy, but more agreeable portrait. The *Iliad* concludes with the ruin, the *Odyssey* with the happiness of a nation. Horace was of the same opinion, as is evident from the epistle to Lollius.

“Seditione, dolis, scelere, atque libidine, & ira,

“Iliacos intra muros peccatur & extra.

“Rursus, quid virtus & quid sapientia possit,

“Utile proposuit nobis exemplar Ulysssem.”

v. 1. *The man for wisdom, &c.*] Homer opens this poem with the utmost simplicity and modesty; he continually grows upon the reader,

“Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem

“Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat.”

Cicero lays this down as a rule for the orator, “*Principia veracunda, non elatis intensa verbis;*” and Horace for the poet, “*Nec sic incipes, &c.*” He proposes the beginning of the *Odyssey* as a pattern for all future poems, and has translated them in his *Art of Poetry*.

“Dic mihi, musa, virum, captæ post tempora Trojæ,

“Qui mores hominum multorum vidit, & urbes.”

May I be forgiven the arrogance, if I should offer a criticism upon this translation: the sufferings of Ulysses are the subject of the whole *Odyssey*, and yet Horace has omitted the mention of those sufferings: ὅς μάλα πολλὰ πλάγχθη. There is another word also which seems essential, that is, πολύτροπον, this is likewise omitted. For the sufferings of Ulysses, and the wisdom by which he extricated himself from them, enter into the very design of the poem. But indeed in another place he has plainly had regard to all these circumstances,



On stormy seas unnumber'd toils he bore,  
Safe with his friends to gain his natal shore :

“ Qui domitor Trojæ, multorum providus urbes  
“ Et mores hominum inspexit, latumque per æquor  
“ Dum sibi, dum sociis, reditum parat, aspera multa  
“ Pertulit” ————— Epist. ad Lolli.

I must also refute a criticism of Rapin, who will have it that the word πολύτροπος includes a character of craft and low cunning, unworthy of a brave spirit. But Eustathius admirably vindicates the poet in this respect; he shews us that τρόπος nowhere in Homer signifies (ἥθη) or morals; and that it implies a man who could accommodate himself to every condition of life; one who in the worst estate had still a reserve to free himself from it; it therefore, says he, signifies a man that through experience has learned wisdom. I have likewise the authority of Horace for this sense, in the above-cited passage,

“ Qui domitor Trojæ, multorum providus urbes.”

I take providus in this place to signify not only a man who noted the manners of various nations with care, but also one who in calamity could foresee methods to extricate himself from it. And surely nothing can be more unjust than what Rapin objects against Ulysses, in employing his wisdom only in his own preservation, while all his companions were lost: Homer himself sufficiently refutes this objection, and directly tells us, that he employed his wisdom in the care of their safety, but that they through their folly defeated his wisdom. The words of Homer, says Eustathius, shew that a wise man neglects not his friends in adversity. But, says Rapin, what could oblige Homer to begin with so dishonourable an action, and place the greatest weakness of his hero in the very frontispiece of his poem? and invoke his muse to sing the man who with difficulty saved himself, and suffered his companions to be destroyed? There had been some weight in this objection, if Ulysses had saved his own, with the loss of their lives; but I cannot see any dishonour in his preserving himself by wisdom, when they destroyed themselves by folly: it was chiefly by storms that they perished; it can be no imputation to his character, not to be able to restrain the effects of a tempest: he did all that a wise man could do, he gave them such admonitions upon every emergency, that if they had pursued them, they had been preserved as well as Ulysses.

v. 1. *For wisdom's various arts renown'd.*] Bossu's observations in relation to this epithet πολύτροπος, given to Ulysses, is worth transcribing. The fable of the Odyssey (says he) is wholly for the conduct and policy of a state: therefore the quality it requires is wisdom; but this virtue is of too large an extent for the simplicity which a just and precise character requires; it is therefore requisite



Vain toils ! their impious folly dar'd to prey  
On herds devoted to the god of day ;

10

it should be limited. The great art of kings is the mystery of dissimulation. It is well known, that Lewis the eleventh, for the instruction of his son, reduced all the Latin language to these words only, viz. " Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare." It was likewise by this practice that Saul began his reign, when he was first elected, and as yet full of the Spirit of God. The first thing we read of him in holy writ is, \* that he made as if he did not hear the words which seditious people spoke against him.

This then is the character which the Greek poet gives his Ulysses in the proposition of his poem, he calls him *ἄνδρα πολύτροπον* ; to denote this prudent dissimulation, which disguised him so many ways, and put him upon taking so many shapes.

Without any thing having been mentioned of Circe, who detained him with her a whole year, and who was famous for the transformations she made of all sorts of persons ; the reader finds him at first with Calypso the daughter of wise Atlas, who bore up the vast pillars that reached from earth to heaven, and whose knowledge penetrated into the depths of the unfathomable ocean : that is to say, who was ignorant of nothing in heaven, earth or sea. And as the first product and principal part of so high, so solid, and so profound a knowledge, was to know how to conceal one's self ; this wise man called his daughter by a name that signified a † secret. The poet makes his hero, whom he designed for a politician, to stay seven whole years with this nymph. She taught him so well, that afterwards he lost no opportunity of putting her lessons in practice : for he does nothing without a disguise. At his parting from Ogygia he is cast upon the isle of Phæacia : as kind as his reception was, yet he stays till the night before he went off, ere he would discover himself. From thence he goes to Ithaca : the first adventure that happened to him there was with Minerva, the most prudent among the deities, as Ulysses was the most prudent among men. She says so expressly in that very passage. Nor did they fail to disguise themselves. Minerva takes upon her the shape of a shepherd, and Ulysses tells her he was obliged to fly from Crete, because he had murdered the son of king Idomeneus. The goddess discovers herself first, and commends him particularly, because the artifices were so easy and natural to him, that they seemed to be born with him. Afterwards the hero under the form of a beggar deceives first of all Eumeus, then his son, and last of all his wife and every body else, till he found an opportunity of punishing his enemies, to whom he discovered not himself till he killed them, namely on the last night. After his discovering himself in the palace, he goes the next day to deceive his father, appearing at first under a borrowed name ; before he would give him joy of his re-

\* Ille vero dissimulabat se audire. Reg. lib. i. † Καλύπτειν.



The god vindictive doom'd them never more  
 (Ah men unblest'd!) to touch that natal shore.  
 Oh snatch some portion of these acts from fate,  
 Celestial muse! and to our world relate.

turn. Thus he takes upon him all manner of shapes, and dissembles to the very last. But the poet joins to this character a valour and a constancy which render him invincible in the most daring and desperate adventures.

v. 3. *Who, when his arms had wrought the destin'd fall  
 Of sacred Troy———]*

Whence is it that Ulysses is said to have overthrown Troy? and not Achilles, who was of more remarkable courage than Ulysses? Eustathius tells us, that the destruction of Troy ought to be ascribed chiefly to Ulysses, as he not only took away the Palladium, but was the inventor of the stratagem of the wooden horse, by which that city was conquered. Virgil in his second book of the *Æneis* gives us a noble description of its destruction, by which we find that Ulysses was not only the contriver of its ruin, but bore a great share in the actions of the night in which that city was overturned.

v. 9. *Vain toils! their impious folly, &c.]* By this single trait, Homer marks an essential difference between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; namely, that in the former poem the people perished by the folly of their kings:

“*Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.*”

In this, the people perish by their own folly, while their prince omits nothing to procure their felicity. A plain reason why the *Odyssey* is more calculated for the people, than the *Iliad*. Dacier.

v. 13. *Oh snatch some portion of these acts from fate.]* It may be asked why the poet invokes the muse to recount only part of the sufferings of Ulysses? and why those words, “To us also” are inserted? To the first it may be answered, that an heroic poem dwells chiefly upon incidents of importance, and passes over every thing that does not contribute to raise our idea of the hero, or the main design of the poem. To the other Eustathius answers several ways: either, says he, the word *καὶ* is to be taken as an expletive, as it is in a thousand places in Homer; or it means that this is a subject so considerable, that it will be a theme to many poets: or that being a true history it had spread over many nations of the world, and that Homer himself received the story of the poem from *Ægypt*; and then the meaning will be, “Sing, oh muse, to the Greeks  
 “as well as to other nations, the sufferings of Ulysses.” I should prefer the first as being the most natural: the rest seem forced, and consequently improper for the opening of a poem, where the utmost plainness is necessary; especially, if we consider that Ulysses was a Grecian, and it is not probable that the Grecians should be the least



Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd; 15  
 All who the wars of ten long years surviv'd,  
 And 'scap'd the perils of the gulfy main.  
 Ulysses, sole of all the victor train,  
 An exile from his dear paternal coast,  
 Deplor'd his absent queen, and empire lost. 20  
 Calypso in her caves constrain'd his stay,  
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay:  
 In vain — for now the circling years disclose  
 The day destin'd to reward his woes.

acquainted with the story, or the latest to celebrate the actions of a Grecian.

v. 15. *Now at their native realms the Greeks arriv'd.*] It is necessary for the better understanding of the poem, to fix the period of time from which it takes its beginning: Homer, as Eustathius observes, does not begin with the wanderings of Ulysses; he steps at once into the latter end of his actions, and leaves the preceding story to be told by way of narration. Thus in his Iliad, he dates his poem from the anger of Achilles, which happened almost at the conclusion of the Trojan war. From hence Horace drew his observation in his Arte Poet.

“Semper ad eventum festinat; & in medias res

“Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit.”

There are but forty-eight days from the departure of Ulysses from Calypso, to his discovery in Ithaca; he had been one year with Circe, and seven with Calypso, when the gods dispatched Mercury to that goddess; from which point of time we are to date the Odyssey.

This observation gives a reason why the poet invokes the muse to recount the wanderings of this hero in part only; for Ulysses, as appears from the beginning of the ninth book, after he left the shores of Troy, was driven to Ismarus of the Ciconians. An historian must have begun from the fall of Troy, and related his wanderings with truth and order; for history is chiefly for instruction: but a poet takes another method, and disposes every circumstance arbitrarily; he chuses or rejects, as suits best with his principal design, and in such a manner as to give at once delight and instruction.

v. 21. *Calypso in her caves constrain'd his stay.*] To the remark before cited of Bessu, upon the abode of Ulysses with Calypso, may be added this of the abbé Fraguier: that his residing seven years in the caves of Calypso (the goddess of secrecy) may only mean that he remained so long hid from the knowledge and inquiry of all men; or that whatever befel him in all that time, was lost to history, or made no part in the poem,



At length his Ithaca is giv'n by fate, 25  
 Where yet new labours his arrival wait ;  
 At length their rage the hostile pow'rs restrain,  
 All but the ruthless monarch of the main.  
 But now the god, remote, a heav'nly guest,  
 In Æthiopia grac'd the genial feast, 30  
 (A race divided, whom with sloping rays  
 The rising and descending sun surveys)  
 There on the world's extreamest verge, rever'd  
 With hecatombs and pray'r in pomp prefer'd,  
 Distant he lay : while in the bright abodes 35  
 Of high Olympus, Jove conven'd the gods :  
 Th' assembly thus the fire supreme addrest,  
 Ægythus' fate revolving in his breast,

v. 28. *All but the ruthless monarch of the main.*] It may be asked why Neptune is thus enraged against Ulysses? Homer himself tells us, because that hero had put out the eye of his son Cyclops. But if we take Neptune by way of allegory for the ocean, the passage implies, that the sufferings of Ulysses were chiefly by sea; and therefore poetry, which adds a grandeur to the meanest circumstance, introduces the god of it as his greatest enemy. Eustathius.

v. 30. *In Æthiopia, &c.*] Strabo in his first book delivers his opinion, that "the ancient Grecians included all those people who  
 "lived upon the southern ocean, from east to west, in the general  
 "name of Æthiopians, and that it was not confined to those only  
 "who lay south of Ægypt." Ptolemy says, "that under the Zo-  
 "diac, from east to west, inhabit the Æthiopians, black of co-  
 "lour." And elsewhere the same geographer divides Æthiopia into the eastern and the western. These eastern and western Æthiopians were separated by the Arabian or Ægyptian gulf; which though never mentioned by Homer, as Aristarchus remarked, yet it is not probable (says Strabo) that he should be ignorant of it, it being but a thousand stadia distant from the Mediterranean, when he knew the Ægyptian Thebes, which was four times as far off. Strab. Plin. Spondan.

I will not repeat what was observed upon the gods being gone to the Æthiopians, in the first book of the Iliad; it is sufficient in general to observe, that the Æthiopians were a people very religious towards the gods, and that they held a pompous feast twelve days annually to their honour; and in particular, that the poet very judiciously makes use of this solemnity to remove Neptune out of the way, who was the enemy of Ulysses, that he may with the greater security bring off his hero from Calypso's island. Eustathius.



Whom young Orestes to the dreary coast  
Of Pluto sent, a blood-polluted ghost. 40

Perverse mankind ! whose wills, created free,  
Charge all their woes on absolute decree ;  
All to the dooming gods their guilt translate,  
And follies are miscall'd the crimes of fate.  
When to his lust Ægyſthus gave the rein, 45  
Did fate, or we, th' adult'rous act constrain ?

v. 41. *Jupiter's speech.*] The solemnity and sententiousness of this speech is taken notice of by Eustathius ; and surely poetry must be highly valuable, when it delivers such excellent instructions. It contained the whole of religion among the ancients ; and made philosophy more agreeable. This passage is an instance of it, a passage worthy of a christian ; it shews us that the Supreme Being is sovereignly good ; that he rewards the just, and punishes the unjust ; and that the folly of man, and not the decree of heaven, is the cause of human calamity.

v. 45. *Ægyſthus.*] It is difficult to find a reason why, in the original, Jupiter should give such an honourable appellation to Ægyſthus, as ἀμύμων, unblameable, who had dishonoured the bed of Agamemnon, and taken his life away ; especially in that very instant when he condemns the fact with so great solemnity : Eustathius says, that Homer, an enemy to censure and invective, introduces that god as having respect only to his good qualities, and commending him for his general character ; and adds that it had been an indecency in the poet to have given countenance to that base custom by the authority of Jupiter. Dacier is not satisfied with this reason, and tells us that Homer gives Ægyſthus this title, to vindicate Jupiter from the imputation of his crimes : he gives us to understand that heaven is not the cause of man's failings ; that he is by creation able to act virtuously, and that it is through his own misconduct that he deviates into evil ; and therefore the meaning is this ; “ Jupiter calling to mind Ægyſthus, that Ægyſthus “ whom he had created wise and virtuous, and made capable to “ sustain that character.” And this agrees admirably with the beginning of the speech of Jupiter, who there vindicates his own divinity.

But if this should seem too refined, it may be sufficient to take the word in that good sense which Ægyſthus might have deserved for many good qualities : thus Achilles is called the “ swift of foot,” even when he stands, or sleeps ; the first being his general character. It may be further confirmed by a passage something resembling it in the holy scriptures : the Ægyptian midwives were guilty of a lye to Pharaoh, and yet God pardons it, and blesses them : he blesses them not because they lyed, but because they preserved the children of the Israelites.



Did fate, or we, when great Atrides dy'd,  
 Urge the bold traitor to the regicide?  
 Hermes I sent, while yet his soul remain'd  
 Sincere from royal blood, and faith profan'd; 50  
 To warn the wretch, that young Orestes, grown  
 To manly years, should re-assert the throne.  
 Yet impotent of mind, and uncontroll'd,  
 He plung'd into the gulf which heav'n foretold.

Here paus'd the god; and pensive thus replies 55  
 Minerva, graceful with her azure eyes.  
 O thou! from whom the whole creation springs,  
 The source of pow'r on earth deriv'd to kings!

v. 49. *Hermes I sent, &c.*] It would be endless to observe every moral passage in the *Odyssey*, the whole of it being but one lesson of morality. But surely it must be a pleasure to the reader to learn what notions the ancients had of a deity, from the oldest book extant, except the book of Moses.

Jupiter here declares that he never fails to warn mankind from evil, and that he had sent Mercury for this purpose to *Ægyptus*. It may be asked what is this Mercury whom Jupiter sends? It is the light of nature, which heaven implants in the breast of every man: and which, as Cicero says, is not only more ancient than the world, but co-eval with the Master of the world himself. He writes to this effect: "There was from the beginning such a thing  
 " as reason, a direct emanation from nature itself, which prompt-  
 " ed to good, and averted from evil. A reason which did not then  
 " become a law, when it was first reduced to writing, but was so  
 " even from the moment it existed, and it existed from ever, of an  
 " equal date with the divine intelligence: it is the true and prim-  
 " ordial law, proper to command and to forbid, it is the reason of  
 " the great Jupiter."

That reason of the Supreme Being, is here called Mercury; that reason flowing from God, which is constantly dictating to the most corrupted hearts, "this is good," or "this is evil." Hence arose an ancient proverb, recorded by Simplicius, "Reason is a Mercury  
 " to all men." Epictetus [lib. iii. Arrian.] says, "Apollo knew  
 " that Laius would not obey his oracle. Apollo nevertheless did  
 " not neglect to prophesy to Laius those evils that threatened him.  
 " The goodness of the divinity never fails to advertise mankind;  
 " that source of truth is ever open and free: but men are ever in-  
 " credulous, disobedient, and rebellious." Dacier.

v. 57. *Minerva's speech.*] It may be asked what relation Ulysses has to *Ægyptus*, that the mention of the one should immediate-



His death was equal to the direful deed ;  
 So may the man of blood be doom'd to bleed ! 60  
 But grief and rage alternate wound my breast  
 For brave Ulysses, still by fate oppress'd.  
 Amidst an isle, around whose rocky shore  
 The forests murmur, and the surges roar,  
 The blameless hero from his wish'd for home 65  
 A goddess guards in her enchanted dome.  
 (Atlas her fire, to whose far-piercing eye  
 The wonders of the deep expanded lie ;

ly give occasion for the remembrance of the other ? And it may appear unnatural in the poet to give rise to his poem by so unexpected a transition from Ægythus to Ulysses. Eustathius vindicates Homer, by shewing that it is not only beautiful but natural, to take rise from what offers itself to our immediate observation. What can be more natural, when Jupiter is relating how he punishes the wicked, than for wisdom or Minerva to suggest, that the good ought to be rewarded ? There is no forced introduction, no artful preparation ; but the whole arises from the occasion, which is a great beauty. Eustathius.

v. 63. *Amidst an isle, &c.*] There was, according to true history, such an island of Calypso, of which Strabo writes ; that Solon gives an account of the island Atlantis bordering upon Ægypt, and that he went thither to make inquiry, and learned that an island was once there, but by time was vanished. Eustathius.

v. 67. *Atlas her fire, to whose far-piercing eye  
 The wonders of the deep expanded lie ;  
 Tb' eternal columns which on earth he rears  
 End in the starry vault, and prop the spheres.]*

Atlas is here said to understand all the depths of the sea : but the epithet ὀλοόφρων applied to him, has two different significations. It implies either, "one whose thoughts are full of terrible and dismal things," or "one who has infinite and unbounded views," and it is doubtful which of them Homer means. To reconcile both, may we not think our author had heard something of the ancient tradition which makes Atlas the same person with Enoch, and represents him as a great astronomer, who prophesied of the universal deluge, and exhorted mankind to repentance ? Therefore he named his son Methuselah, to shew that after his death the waters should overspread the face of the earth. His continual lamentations on this occasion caused him to be called the Weeper ; for the world is always an enemy to melancholy predictions. Thus Homer upon the credit of this tradition might very well call Atlas, "one whose



Th' eternal columns which on earth he rears  
 End in the starry vault, and prop the spheres.) 70  
 By his fair daughter is the chief confin'd,  
 Who soothes to dear delight his anxious mind :  
 Successless all her soft caresses prove,  
 To banish from his breast his country's love ;  
 To see the smoke from his lov'd palace rise, 75 }  
 While the dear isle in distant prospect lies, }  
 With what contentment could he close his eyes ? }

“ thoughts ran upon dismal things, or one whose views and cares  
 “ were vastly extended.”

I insist no otherwise upon this, but as a conjecture ; yet it is further strengthened by what follows in the next lines : “ That Atlas sustains those columns, which being fixed upon the earth support the heavens.” This is generally interpreted of his great skill in astronomy and geography. But may not the reason be more particular ? Since Atlas or Enoch had prophesied of the deluge, and since that prediction was looked upon as the effect of his skill in astronomy ; might it not be said he knew the abysses of the sea, and sustained the pillars of heaven, to express that he knew how the fountains of the deep, and the waters above the heavens should unite to drown the earth ?

As to the image of the “ pillars of heaven,” it is frequent in the sacred books, and used to express the height of vast mountains. (Pindar calls *Ætna* the *ἑρμῆαν κίονα* :) and there might probably be something more particular that furnished Homer with this idea ; I mean the pillars of Hercules, well known in his time, and neighbouring to the mountain he describes. Dacier.

See the description of this mountain in the fourth book of Virgil, where the same image is preserved without any hint of allegory : as indeed it is no more than a poetical manner of expressing the great height and extensive prospect of the mountain.

v. 75. *To see the smoke from his lov'd palace rise.*] There is an agreeable tenderness in this image, and nothing can better paint the ardent desire a man naturally has to review his native country after a long absence. This is still stronger than that which Cicero extols in several places of his works, that Ulysses preferred the sight of Ithaca to the immortality proffered him by Calypso. He here desires to purchase, at the price of his life, the pleasure, not of returning to his country, but even of seeing at a distance the very smoke of it. Dacier.

There are some things dispersed in this speech of Pallas, which I shall lay together ; as that Minerva makes it an aggravation to the calamity of Ulysses, to be detained by a goddess that loves him ; that he is inclosed in an island ; and she adds, round which the seas



And will Omnipotence neglect to save  
 The suffering virtue of the wise and brave?  
 Must he, whose altars on the Phrygian shore 80  
 With frequent rites, and pure, avow'd thy pow'r,  
 Be doom'd the worst of human ills to prove,  
 Unblest'd, abandon'd to the wrath of Jove?

Daughter! what words have pass'd thy lips un-  
 weigh'd?

(Reply'd the Thund'rer to the martial maid) 85  
 Deem not unjustly by my doom oppress'd  
 Of human race the wisest and the best.  
 Neptune, by pray'r repentant rarely won,  
 Afflicts the chief, t' avenge his giant-son,  
 Whose visual orb Ulysses robb'd of light; 90  
 Great Polypheme, of more than mortal might!  
 Him young Thoösa bore (the bright increase  
 Of Phorcys, dreaded in the founts and seas :)  
 Whom Neptune ey'd with bloom of beauty blest,  
 And in his cave the yielding nymph compress'd. 95

flow; as if that was not common to all islands; but these expressions are used to shew the impossibility of the escape of Ulysses, without the interposition of Jupiter.

In the conclusion she observes, that Ulysses never neglected to sacrifice before Troy: this is said to shew the great piety of Ulysses, who not only paid his sacrifices in Ithaca, where he abounded in riches, but amongst strangers in an enemy's country, where there might be a scarcity of offerings. Eustathius.

v. 84. *Daughter! what words, &c.*] This verse is frequently repeated both in the Iliad and the Odyssey; it has here a particular energy. Jupiter reproveth Minerva for supposing he could ever be unmindful of an hero so pious as Ulysses. It is spoken with vehemence; an instance, says Eustathius, that it is not only equitable, but an attribute of divinity, for rulers to remember those who serve them faithfully.

v. 89. *T' avenge his giant-son.*] It is artful in the poet to tell the reader the occasion of the sufferings of Ulysses in the opening of the poem; it is a justice due to his character, to shew that his misfortunes are not the consequence of his crimes, but the effect of Neptune's anger.

It is observable, that Homer does not stop to explain how Ulysses put out the eye of the Cyclops: he hastens forward into the middle of his poem, and leaves that for the future narration of Ulysses.



For this, the god constrains the Greek to roam,  
 A hopeless exile from his native home,  
 From death alone exempt — but cease to mourn ;  
 Let all combine t' atchieve his wish'd return :  
 Neptune aton'd, his wrath shall now refrain, 100  
 Or thwart the synod of the gods in vain.

Father and king ador'd ! Minerva cry'd,  
 Since all who in th' Olympian bow'r reside  
 Now make the wand'ring Greek their public care,  
 Let Hermes to th' \* Atlantic isle repair ; 105  
 Bid him, arriv'd in bright Calypso's court,  
 The sanction of th' assembled pow'rs report :  
 That wise Ulysses to his native land  
 Must speed, obedient to their high command.  
 Meantime Telemachus, the blooming heir 110  
 Of sea-girt Ithaca, demands my care :

\* Ogygia.

v. 110. *Meantime Telemachus — demands my care, &c.*] Rapin has raised several objections against this piece of conduct in Homer : he tells us that the action of the *Odyssey* is imperfect, that it begins with the voyages of Telemachus, and ends with those of Ulysses : that the four first books are all concerning Telemachus : that his voyage bears no proportion to that of Ulysses : that it contributes nothing to his return, which is brought about by Jupiter, and the assistance of the Phæacians : that this gave occasion to Beni in his academical discourses to assert, that the fable of the *Odyssey* is double : that the four first books of it are neither episode, nor part of an action, nor have any connection with the rest of the work.

I am of opinion, that these objections are made with too great severity ; the destruction of the suitors is the chief hinge upon which the poem turns, as it contributes chiefly to the re-establishment of Ulysses in his country and regality ; and whatever contributes to this end, contributes to the principal action, and is of a piece with the rest of the poem ; and that this voyage does so is evident, in that it gives a defeat to the suitors, and controlls their insolence ; it preserves Ulysses's throne and bed inviolate, in that it gives Telemachus courage to resist their attempts : it sets his character in a fair point of light, who is the second personage of the poem, and is to have a great share in the future actions of it.

Eustathius judiciously observes, that Homer here prepares the way for the defeat of the suitors, the chief design of his poem ; and



'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years,  
 In sage debates ; furrounded with his peers,  
 To save the state ; and timely to restrain  
 The bold intrusion of the suitor-train ; 115  
 Who croud his palace, and with lawless pow'r  
 His herds and flocks in feastful rites devour.  
 To distant Sparta, and the spacious waste  
 Of sandy Pyle, the royal youth shall haste.

lays the ground-work of probability on which he intends to build his poem, and reconcile it to the rules of credibility.

If it be asked for what end this voyage of Telemachus is made ; the answer is, to inquire after Ulysses : so that whatever episodes are interwoven, Ulysses is still in view ; and whatever Telemachus acts, is undertaken solely upon his account ; and consequently, whatever is acted, contributes to the principal design, the restoration of Ulysses. So that the fable is intire, and the action not double.

It is to be remembered also, that the sufferings of Ulysses are the subject of the poem ; his personal calamities are not only intended, but his domestic misfortunes ; and by this conduct Homer shews us the extent of his misfortunes : his queen is attempted, his throne threatened, and his wealth consumed in riot ; Ulysses suffers in Telemachus, and in every circumstance of life is unhappy.

v. 112. *'Tis mine, to form his green, unpractis'd years, &c.*] In this the poet draws the out-lines of what he is to fill up in the four subsequent books : and nothing can give us a greater idea of his unbounded invention, than his building upon so plain a foundation such a noble superstructure : he entertains us with variety of episodes, historical relations, and manners of those ancient times : it must be confessed, that the characters in the Odyssey, and the number of the chief actors, are but few ; and yet the poet never tires : he varies and diversifies the story so happily, that he is continually opening new scenes to engage our attention. He resembles his own Proteus, he is capable of all shapes, yet in all shapes the same deity.

v. 118. *To distant Sparta, and the spacious waste  
 Of sandy Pyle —* ]

Rapin is very severe upon this conduct. When Telemachus, says he, is to search for his father in the courts of Greece, he cannot make the least progress without Minerva ; it is she who inspires his thoughts, and assists in the execution. Could not honour, duty or nature have moved his heart towards an absent father ? The machine, adds he, has not the least appearance of probability, inasmuch as the goddess conducts him to every place, except only where Ulysses resides ; of which she ought by no means to be ignorant, upon the account of her divinity.



There, warm with filial love, the cause inquire 120  
That from his realm retards his god-like fire :  
Deliv'ring early to the voice of fame  
The promise of a great, immortal name.

She said : the sandals of celestial mold  
Fledg'd with ambrosial plumes, and rich with gold, 125  
Surround her feet ; with these sublime she sails  
Th' aerial space, and mounts the winged gales :  
O'er earth and ocean wide prepar'd to soar,  
Her dreaded arm a beamy jav'lin bore,  
Pond'rous and vast ; which, when her fury burns, 130  
Proud tyrants humbles, and whole hosts o'erturns.  
From high Olympus prone her flight she bends,  
And in the realm of Ithaca descends.  
Her lineaments divine, the grave disguise  
Of Mentès' form conceal'd from human eyes : 135  
(Mentès, the monarch of the Taphian land)  
A glitt'ring spear wav'd awful in her hand.

But surely nothing can be more natural, than for a son, in order to gain intelligence of an absent father, to inquire in those places, and of those persons, where and from whom he is most likely to have information. Such is the conduct of Telemachus : and poetry, which delights in the wonderful, because this conduct agrees with wisdom, ascribes it to Minerva the goddess of it. No doubt but Minerva knew where Ulysses resided : but men must act as men ; such an immediate interposition as Rapin requires, had stopp'd at once the fountain of the poet's invention. If what a poet invents be natural, it is justifiable ; and he may give the rein to his imagination, if he restrain it from running into extravagance and wildness.

v. 136. *Mentès, the monarch of the Taphian land.*] We are told by tradition, that Homer was so sensible of friendship, that to do honour to his particular friends, he immortalised their names in his poems. In the Iliad he has shewn his gratitude to Tychius ; and in the Odyssey, to Mentès, Phemius, and Mentor. This Mentès was a famous merchant of the isle of Leucade, who received Homer at Smyrna, and made him his companion in all his voyages. It is to this Mentès we owe the two poems of Homer ; for the poet in all probability had never wrote them without those lights and informations he received, and the discoveries he was enabled to make, by those travels. Homer is not contented to give his name to the king of the Taphians, but feigns also that the goddess of wisdom



There in the portal plac'd, the heav'n-born maid  
 Enormous riot and mis-rule survey'd.  
 On hides of beeves, before the palace gate, 140  
 (Sad spoils of luxury) the suitors fat.  
 With rival art, and ardour in their mien,  
 At chefs they vie, to captivate the queen ;  
 Divining of their loves. Attending nigh,  
 A menial train the flowing bowl supply : 145

chose to appear in his shape preferably to that of all the kings who were nearer neighbours to Ithaca. Eustathius thinks there might have been a real king of Taphos of this name, who was a friend to Ulysses. This may possibly be ; but I would chuse to adhere rather to the old tradition, as it does honour to friendship. Dacier.

v. 139. *Enormus riot and mis rule.*] This is the first appearance of the suitors ; and the poet has drawn their pictures in such colours, as are agreeable to their characters through the whole poem. They are, as Horace expresses it,

“ — — — Fruges consumere nati,  
 “ Sponsi Penelopes, nebulones” —

The poet gives a fine contrast between them and Telemachus ; he entertains himself with his own thoughts, weighs the sum of things, and beholds with a virtuous sorrow the disorders of the suitors : he appears (like Ulysses among his transformed companions in the tenth book) a wise man, among brutes.

v. 143. *At chefs they vie, to captivate the queen ;  
 Divining of their loves. —*]

There are great disputes what this game was, at which the suitors played. Athenæus relates it from Apian the grammarian, who had it from Cteson a native of Ithaca, that the sport was in this manner. The number of the suitors being one hundred and eight, they equally divided their men or balls ; that is to say, fifty-four on each side ; these were placed on the board opposite to each other. Between the two sides was a vacant space, in the midst of which was the main mark, or queen, the point which all were to aim at. They took their turns by lot ; he who took or displaced that mark, got his own in its place ; and if by a second man, he again took it, without touching any of the others, he won the game ; and it passed as an omen of obtaining his mistress. This principal mark, or queen, was called by whatever name the gamesters pleased ; and the suitors gave it the name of Penelope.

It is said, this game was invented by Palamedes during the siege of Troy. [Sophocles in Palam.] Eustathius. Spondanus. Dacier.



Others, apart, the spacious hall prepare,  
 And form the costly feast with busy care.  
 There young Telemachus, his bloomy face  
 Glowing celestial sweet, with god-like grace  
 Amid the circle shines : but hope and fear 150  
 (Painful vicissitude!) his bosom tear.  
 Now imag'd in his mind, he sees restor'd  
 In peace and joy, the people's rightful lord ;  
 The proud oppressors fly the vengeful sword.  
 While his fond soul these fancied triumphs swell'd ; 155  
 The stranger guest, the royal youth beheld :  
 Griev'd that a visitant so long should wait  
 Unmark'd, unhonour'd, at a monarch's gate ;  
 Instant he flew with hospitable haste,  
 And the new friend with courteous air embrac'd. 160  
 Stranger ! whoe'er thou art, securely rest,  
 Affianc'd in my faith, a friendly guest :  
 Approach the dome, the social banquet share,  
 And then the purpose of thy soul declare.

Thus affable and mild, the prince precedes, 165  
 And to the dome th' unknown celestial leads.  
 The spear receiving from her hand, he plac'd  
 Against a column, fair with sculpture grac'd ;  
 Where seemly rang'd in peaceful order stood  
 Ulysses' arms, now long disus'd to blood. 170  
 He led the goddess to the sov'reign seat,  
 Her feet supported with a stool of state ;  
 (A purple carpet spread the pavement wide)  
 Then drew his seat, familiar, to her side ;

v. 157. *Griev'd that a visitant so long should wait.*] The reader will lose much of the pleasure of this poem, if he reads it without the reflection, that he peruses one of the most ancient books in the world ; it sets before him persons, places and actions that existed three thousand years ago : here we have an instance of the humanity of those early ages : Telemachus pays a reverence to this stranger, only because he is a stranger : he attends him in person, and welcomes him with all the openness of ancient hospitality,



Far from the suitor-train, a brutal crowd, 175  
 With insolence, and wine, elate and loud :  
 Where the free guest, unnoted, might relate,  
 If haply conscious, of his father's fate.  
 The golden ew'r a maid obsequious brings,  
 Replenish'd from the cool, translucent springs ; 180  
 With copious water the bright vase supplies  
 A silver laver, of capacious size :  
 They wash. The tables in fair order spread,  
 They heap the glitt'ring canisters with bread :  
 Viands of various kinds allure the taste, 185  
 Of choicest sort and flavour, rich repast !

v. 185, &c. *The feast describ'd.*] There is nothing that has drawn more ridicule upon Homer, than the frequent descriptions of his entertainments : it has been judged, that he was more than ordinarily delighted with them, since he omits no opportunity to describe them ; nay his temperance has not been unsuspected, according to that verse of Horace.

“ *Laudibus arguitur vini vinosus Homerus.* ”

But we must not condemn without stronger evidence : a man may commend a sumptuous entertainment, or good wines, without being either a drunkard or a glutton. But since there are so many entertainments described in the poem, it may not be improper to give this some explanation.

They wash before the feast ; perhaps, says Eustathius, because they always, at the feast, made libations to the gods. The ewer was of gold, the vessel from whence the water was poured of silver, and the cups out of which they drank, were of gold.

A damsel attends Mentis, but heralds wait upon the suitors : Eustathius observes a decency in this conduct ; the suitors were lewd debauchees, and consequently a woman of modesty would have been an improper attendant upon such a company. Beautiful youths attend the company in quality of cup-bearers.

A matron who has the charge of the household (*ταμὴν*) brings in the bread and the cold meats, for so Eustathius interprets *εἰδᾶλα* ; an officer, whose employ it was to portion out the victuals, brings in the meats that furnished out the rest of the entertainment ; and after the feast, a bard diverts them with vocal and instrumental music.

Dacier is in great pain about the cold victuals ; she is afraid lest the reader should think them the leavings of a former day : and tells us they might possibly be in the nature of our cold tongues, jambons, &c. But I think such fears to be groundless : we must



Delicious wines th' attending herald brought ;  
 The gold gave lustre to the purple draught.  
 Lur'd with the vapour of the fragrant feast,  
 In rush'd the suitors with voracious haste : 190  
 Marshall'd in order due, to each a few'r  
 Presents, to bathe his hands, a radiant ew'r.  
 Luxurious then they feast. Observant round  
 Gay stripling youths the brimming goblets crown'd.  
 The rage of hunger quell'd, they all advance, 195  
 And form to measur'd airs the mazy dance :  
 To Phemius was consign'd the chorded lyre,  
 Whose hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire :  
 Phemius, whose voice divine could sweetest sing  
 High strains, responsive to the vocal string. 200

Meanwhile, in whispers to his heav'nly guest  
 His indignation thus the prince exprest.

Indulge my rising grief, whilst these (my friend)  
 With song and dance the pompous revel end.  
 Light is the dance, and doubly sweet the lays, 205  
 When, for the dear delight, another pays.  
 His treasur'd stores these cormorants consume,  
 Whose bones, defrauded of a regal tomb

have reference to the customs of those early ages ; and if it was customary for cold meats to be served up (neither is it necessary to suppose them the leavings of the former entertainment) it can be no disgrace to the hospitality of Telemachus.

v. 197. *To Phemius was consign'd the chorded lyre.*] In ancient times, princes entertained in their families certain learned and wise men, who were both poets and philosophers, and not only made it their business to amuse and delight, but to promote wisdom and morality. Ulysses, at his departure for Troy, left one of these with Penelope : and it was usual to consign in this manner, the care of their wives and families to the poets of those days, as appears from a signal passage in the third book, verse (of the original) 267, &c. To this man Homer gives the name of Phemius ; to celebrate one of his friends, who was so called, and who had been his præceptor (says Eustathius.) I must add one remark, that though he places his master here in no very good company, yet he guards his character from any imputation, by telling us, that he attended the suitors by compulsion. This is not only a great instance of his gratitude, but also of his tenderness and delicacy.



And common turf, lie naked on the plain,  
 Or doom'd to welter in the whelming main. 210  
 Should he return, that troop so blithe and bold,  
 With purple robes inwrought, and stiff with gold,  
 Precipitant in fear, would wing their flight,  
 And curse their cumb'rous pride's unweildly weight.  
 But ah I dream! — th' appointed hour is fled, 215  
 And hope, too long with vain delusion fed,  
 Deaf to the rumour of fallacious fame,  
 Gives to the roll of death his glorious name!  
 With venial freedom let me now demand  
 Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land: 220  
 Sincere, from whence began thy course, recite,  
 And to what ship I owe the friendly freight?  
 Now first to me this visit dost thou deign,  
 Or number'd in my father's social train?  
 All who deserv'd his choice, he made his own, 225  
 And curious much to know, he far was known.  
 My birth I boast (the blue-ey'd virgin cries)  
 From great Anchialus, renown'd and wise:  
 Mentès my name; I rule the Taphian race,  
 Whose bounds the deep circumfluent waves embrace:  
 A duteous people, and industrious isle, 231  
 To naval arts inur'd, and stormy toil.  
 Freightèd with iron from my native land,  
 I steer my voyage to the Brutian strand;

v. 225. *All who deserv'd his choice —*] It is evident from this and many other places in the Iliad, that hospitality was hereditary; an happiness and honour peculiar to those heroic ages. And surely nothing can set the character of Ulysses in a more agreeable point of light, than what Telemachus here delivers of it: "He was the friend of all mankind." Eustathius observes, that ἐπίεστος has a middle signification; that it implies that Ulysses behaved benevolently to all men; or that all men behaved benevolently to Ulysses; either sense makes Ulysses a very amiable person: he must be a friend to all men, to whom all men are friends.

v. 234. *I steer my voyage to the Brutian strand.*] In the country of the Brutians, in the lower part of Italy, was a town called Temese.



To gain by commerce, for the labour'd mafs, 235  
 A juft proportion of refulgent brafs.  
 Far from your capital my fhip refides  
 At Reithrus, and fecure at anchor rides ;  
 Where waving groves on airy Neion grow,  
 Supremely tall, and fhade the deeps below. 240  
 Thence to re-vifit your imperial dome,  
 An old hereditary gueft I come :  
 Your father's friend. Laertes can relate  
 Our faith unspotted, and its early date ;  
 Who preft with heart-corroding grief and years, 245  
 To the gay court a rural fhed prefers,

That Homer here meant this city, and not one of the fame name in Cyprus, appears not only becaufe this was famous for works of brafs, but becaufe (as Strabo obferves) Ithaca lay in the direct way from Taphos to this city of the Brutii ; whereas it was confiderably out of the way to pafs by Ithaca to that of Cyprus. The fame author fays, that the rooms for preparing of brafs were remaining in his time, though then out of ufe. Ovid. Met. xv.

“ Hippotadæque domos regis, Temefefque metalla.”

And Statius, Sylv.

“ — — — fe totis Temefe dedit haufta metallis.”

Bochart is opinion, that the name of Temefe was given to this town by the Phœnicians, from the brafs it produced, Temes in their language fignifying fuſion of metals : an art to which the Phœnicians much applied themſelves. Eufthius, Dacier.

v. 245. *Laertes's retirement.*] This moſt beautiful paſſage of Laertes has not eſcaped the cenſure of the critics : they ſay he acts an unmanly part, he forgets that he is a king, and reduces himſelf unworthily into the condition of a ſervant. Eufthius gives two reaſons for his retirement, which answer thoſe objections ; the firſt is, that he could not endure to ſee the outrage and infolence of the ſuitors ; the ſecond, that his grief for Ulyſſes makes him abandon ſociety, and prefer his vineyard to his court. This is undoubtedly the picture of human nature under affliction ; for ſorrow loves ſolitude. Thus it is, as Dacier well obſerves, that Menedemus in Terence laments his loſt ſon : Menedemus is the picture of Laertes. Nor does it make any difference, that the one is a king, the other a perſon of private ſtation : kings are but ennobled humanity, and are liable, as other men, to as great, if not greater ſenſibility.



Where sole of all his train, a matron sage  
 Supports with homely food his drooping age,  
 With feeble steps from marshalling his vines  
 Returning sad, when toilsome day declines. 250

With friendly speed, induc'd by erring fame,  
 'To hail Ulysses' safe return I came :  
 But still the frown of some celestial pow'r  
 With envious joy retards the blissful hour.  
 Let not your soul be sunk in sad despair ; 255  
 He lives, he breathes this heav'nly vital air,  
 Among a savage race, whose shelfy bounds  
 With ceaseless roar the foaming deep furrounds.  
 The thoughts which roll within my ravish'd breast,  
 'To me, no seer, th' inspiring gods suggest ; 260  
 Nor skill'd, nor studious, with prophetic eye  
 To judge the winged omens of the sky.  
 Yet hear this certain speech, nor deem it vain ;  
 Tho' adamantine bonds the chief restrain,

The word ἐπὶ πύρρον (creeping about his vineyard) has also given offence, as it carries an idea of meanness with it ; but Eustathius observes, that it excellently expresses the melancholy of Laertes, and denotes no meanness of spirit : the same word is applied to the great Achilles in the Iliad, when he laments at the obsequies of Patroclus ; and Horace no doubt had it in his view,

“ — — — Tacitum sylvas inter-reptare salubres.”

v. 257. *Among a savage race, &c.*] It is the observation of Eustathius, that what Minerva here delivers bears resemblance to the oracles, in which part is false, and part true : that Ulysses is detained in an island, is a truth ; that he is detained by barbarians, a falsehood : this is done by the goddess, that she may be thought to be really a man, as she appears to be ; she speaks with the dubiousness of a man, not the certainty of a goddess ; she raises his expectation by shewing she has an insight into futurity ; and to engage his belief she discovers in part the truth to Telemachus. Neither was it necessary or convenient for Telemachus to know the whole truth : for if he had known that Ulysses inhabited a desert, detained by a goddess, he must of consequence have known of his return, (for he that could certify the one, could certify the other) and so had never gone in search of him ; and it would hence have happened, that Homer had been deprived of giving us those graces of poetry which arise from the voyage of Telemachus. Eustathius.



The dire restraint his wisdom will defeat, 265  
And soon restore him to his regal seat.

But, gen'rous youth! sincere and free declare,  
Are you, of manly growth, his royal heir?  
For sure Ulysses in your look appears,  
The same his features, if the same his years. 270

Such was that face, on which I dwelt with joy  
Ere Greece assembled stemm'd the tides to Troy;  
But parting then for that detested shore,  
Our eyes unhappy! never greeted more.

To prove a genuine birth (the prince replies) 275  
On female truth assenting faith relies;

v. 275. *To prove a genuine birth, &c.*] There is an appearance of something very shocking in this speech of Telemachus. It literally runs thus: "My mother assures me that I am the son of Ulysses, but I know it not." It seems to reflect upon his mother's chastity, as if he had a doubt of his own legitimacy. This seeming simplicity in Telemachus, says Eustathius, is the effect of a troubled spirit; it is grief that makes him doubt if he can be the son of the great, the generous Ulysses; it is no reflection upon Penelope, and consequently no fault in Telemachus: it is an undoubted truth that the mother only knows the legitimacy of the child: thus Euripides,

Ἡ μὲν, γὰρ αὐτῆς οἶδεν ὄντα, ὃδ' οἶεταί.

that is, the mother knows the child, the father only believes it.  
Thus also Menander,

Αὐτὸν γὰρ ἔδειξ οἶδε, τῷ πότ' ἐγένετο.  
Ἄλλ' ὑπονοῦμεν πάντες, ἢ πεισεύσομεν.

that is, No man knows assuredly who begot him, we only guess it, and believe it.

Aristotle in his Rhetoric is also of this opinion;

Ἄριστα περὶ τῶν τέκνων κρίνουσιν αἱ γυναῖκες.

What I have here said, is literally translated from Eustathius, and if it edifies the reader I am content. But the meaning of the passage is this, Mentis asks Telemachus if he be the son of Ulysses; he replies, "So my mother assures me; but nothing sure so wretched as I am could proceed from that great man."



Thus manifest of right, I build my claim  
 Sure-founded on a fair maternal fame,  
 Ulysses' son: but happier he, whom fate  
 Hath plac'd beneath the storms which tofs the great!  
 Happier the son, whose hoary fire is blest 281  
 With humble affluence, and domestic rest!  
 Happier than I, to future empire born,  
 But doom'd a father's wretched fate to mourn!

To whom, with aspect mild, the guest divine. 285  
 Oh true descendant of a scepter'd line!  
 The gods, a glorious fate from anguish free  
 To chaste Penelope's increase decree.  
 But say, yon' jovial troop so gaily drest,  
 Is this a bridal or a friendly feast! 290

Or from their deed I rightlier may divine,  
 Unseemly flown with insolence and wine;  
 Unwelcome revellers, whose lawless joy  
 Pains the sage ear, and hurts the sober eye?  
 Magnificence of old (the prince reply'd) 295  
 Beneath our roof with virtue could reside;  
 Unblam'd abundance crown'd the royal board,  
 What time this dome rever'd her prudent lord;  
 Who now (so heav'n decrees) is doom'd to mourn,  
 Bitter constraint! erroneous and forlorn. 300

Better the chief, on Ilion's hostile plain,  
 Had fall'n furrounded with his warlike train;  
 Or safe return'd, the race of glory past,  
 New to his friends embrace, had breath'd his last!  
 Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes would raise  
 Historic marbles, to record his praise; 306  
 His praise, eternal on the faithful stone,  
 Had with transmissive honour grac'd his son.

But however this may be reconciled to truth, I believe few ladies would take it as a compliment, if their sons should tell them there was room to doubt of their legitimacy; there may be abundance of truth in it, and yet very little decency.



Now snatch'd by harpies to the dreary coast,  
 Sunk is the hero, and his glory lost: 310  
 Vanish'd at once! unheard-of, and unknown!  
 And I his heir in misery alone.  
 Nor for a dear, lost father only flow  
 The filial tears, but woe succeeds to woe:  
 To tempt the spouseless queen with am'rous wiles, 315  
 Resort the nobles from the neighb'ring isles;  
 From Samos, circled with th' Iönian main,  
 Dulichium, and Zacynthus' silvan reign:  
 Ev'n with presumptuous hope her bed t' ascend,  
 The lords of Ithaca their right pretend. 320  
 She seems attentive to their pleaded vows,  
 Her heart detesting what her ear allows.  
 They, vain expectants of the bridal hour,  
 My stores in riotous expence devour,  
 In feast and dance the mirthful months employ, 325  
 And meditate my doom, to crown their joy.

With tender pity touch'd, the goddess cry'd:  
 Soon may kind heav'n a sure relief provide,

v. 309. *Now snatch'd by harpies, &c.*] The meaning of this expression is, that Ulysses has not had the rites of sepulture. This among the ancients was esteemed the greatest of calamities, as it hindered the shades of the deceased from entering into the state of the happy.

v. 315. *To tempt the spouseless queen——resort the nobles.*] It is necessary to reconcile the conduct of the suitors to probability, since it has so great a share in the process of the Odyssey. It may seem incredible that Penelope, who is a queen, in whom the supreme power is lodged, should not dismiss such unwelcome intruders, especially since many of them were her own subjects: besides, it seems an extraordinary way of courtship in them, to ruin the person to whom they make their addresses.

To solve this objection, we must consider the nature of the Grecian governments: the chief men of the land had great authority: though the government was monarchical, it was not despotic: Laertes was retired, and disabled with age; Telemachus was yet in his minority; and the fear of any violence either against her own person, or against her son, might deter Penelope from using any endeavours to remove men of such insolence, and such power. Dacier.



Soon may your fire discharge the vengeance due,  
 And all your wrongs the proud oppressors rue! 330  
 Oh! in that portal should the chief appear,  
 Each hand tremendous with a brazen spear,  
 In radiant panoply his limbs incas'd;  
 (For so of old my father's court he grac'd,  
 When social mirth unbent his serious soul, 335  
 O'er the full banquet, and the sprightly bowl)  
 He then from Ephyré, the fair domain  
 Of Ilus, sprung from Jason's royal strain,  
 Measur'd a length of seas, a toilsome length, in vain. }  
 For voyaging to learn the direful art 340  
 To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart;  
 Observant of the gods, and sternly just,  
 Ilus refus'd t' impart the baneful trust:  
 With friendlier zeal my father's soul was fir'd,  
 The drugs he knew, and gave the boon desir'd. 345  
 Appear'd he now with such heroic port,  
 As then conspicuous at the Taphian court;  
 Soon should yon' boasters cease their haughty strife,  
 Or each atone his guilty love with life.

v. 341. *To taint with deadly drugs the barbed dart* ] It is necessary to explain this passage. It seems at first view, as if Ulysses had requested what a good man could not grant. Ilus, says Menes, denied the poison, because he feared the anger of the gods; and the poison itself is called by Homer *Ἀνδροφόνον*, as if it were designed against mankind. Eustathius defends Ulysses variously: he intended, says he, to employ it against beasts only; that infested his country, or in hunting. He assigns another reason, and says that the poet is preparing the way to give an air of probability to the destruction of the suitors. He poisons his arrows, that every wound may be mortal; on this account the poison may be called *Ἀνδροφόνον*; for it is certain in the wars of Troy poisoned arrows were not in use, for many persons who were wounded recovered; so that of necessity they must be reserved for domestic occasions. From what has been said we may collect the reason why Anchialus granted the poison to Ulysses, and Ilus denied it; Anchialus was the friend of Ulysses, and knew that he would not employ it to any ill purpose: but Ilus, who was a stranger to him, was afraid lest he should abuse it. Eustathius.



But of his wish'd return the care resign ; 350  
 Be future vengeance to the pow'rs divine.  
 My sentence hear : with stern distaste avow'd,  
 To their own districts drive the suitor-crowd :  
 When next the morning warms the purple east,  
 Convoke the peerage, and the gods attest ; 335  
 The sorrows of your inmost soul relate ;  
 And form sure plans to save the sinking state.  
 Should second love a pleasing flame inspire,  
 And the chaste queen connubial rites require ;  
 Dismiss'd with honour, let her hence repair 360  
 To great Icarius, whose paternal care  
 Will guide her passion, and reward her choice  
 With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.  
 Then let this dictate of my love prevail :  
 Instant, to foreign realms prepare to sail, 365  
 To learn your father's fortunes : fame may prove,  
 Or omen'd voice, (the messenger of Jove)

v. 360. *Dismiss'd with honour, let her hence repair.*] I will lay before the reader literally what Eustathius observes upon these words. There is a solecism, says he, in these verses or words, that cannot be reduced to the rules of construction. It should be μήτηρ, not μητέρα ἀψ' ἴτω. How then comes the accusative case to be used instead of the nominative? Mentès, adds he, may be supposed to have intended to have said ἀποπέμψον, (send thy mother away;) but considering in the midst of the sentence, that such advice was not suitable to be given to Telemachus, he checks himself, and suppresses ἀποπέμψον; and no other word immediately occurring, that required an accusative case, he falls into a solecism.

But perhaps this is more ingenious than true; though Mentès was in haste when he spoke it, Homer was not when he composed it. Might not an error creep into the original by the negligence of a transcriber, who might write Μητέρα for Μήτηρ? This is the more probable, because the one stands in the verse in every respect as well as the other.

What Eustathius adds is very absurd: he says that Telemachus must observe both the interpretations, either send thy mother away, or let thy mother retire. So that the advice was double, send thy mother away if thou dost not love her; but if thou art unwilling to grieve her, let her recess be voluntary.

v. 367. *Omen'd voice———of Jove.*] There is a difficulty in this passage. In any case of enquiry, any words that were heard



Propitious to the search. Direct your toil  
 Thro' the wide ocean first to sandy Pyle;  
 Of Nestor, hoary sage, his doom demand: 370  
 Thence speed your voyage to the Spartan strand;  
 For young Atrides to th' Achaian coast  
 Arriv'd the last of all the victor host.  
 If yet Ulysses views the light; forbear,  
 'Till the fleet hours restore the circling year. 375  
 But if his soul hath wing'd the destin'd flight,  
 Inhabitant of deep disastrous night;  
 Homeward with pious speed repass the main,  
 To the pale shade funereal rites ordain,  
 Plant the fair column o'er the vacant grave, 380  
 A hero's honours let the hero have.  
 With decent grief the royal dead deplor'd,  
 For the chaste queen select an equal lord.  
 Then let revenge your daring mind employ,  
 By fraud or force the suitor-train destroy, 385  
 And starting into manhood, scorn the boy.  
 Hast thou not heard how young Orestes, fir'd  
 With great revenge, immortal praise acquir'd?

by accident were called by the Latins, omens; by Homer, the voice of Jupiter; and he styles them so, because it is through his providence that those words come to our knowledge: *αλέος* signifies fame or rumour; and the ancients referred all voices or sounds to Jupiter: and styled him *Ζεὺς πανομφαῖος*. So that the voice of Jove implies any words that we hear by chance, from whence we can draw any thing that gives light to our concerns or enquiries. Dacier. Eustathius.

v. 387. *Hast thou not heard, &c.*] It may seem that this example of Orestes does not come fully up to the purpose intended: there is a wide difference in the circumstances: Orestes slew an adulterer, and a single person, with an adulteress. The designs of Telemachus are not against one, but many enemies; neither are they adulterers, nor have they slain the father of Telemachus, as is the case of Orestes: nor is Penelope an adulteress. The intent therefore of the goddess is only to shew what a glorious act it is to defend our parents. Orestes, says Mentis, is every where celebrated for honouring his father, and thou shalt obtain equal honour by defending thy mother.



His virgin-sword, Ægyhstus' veins imbru'd;  
The murd'rer fell, and blood aton'd for blood. 390

O greatly blest'd with every blooming grace!

With equal steps the paths of glory trace;

Join to that royal youth's your rival name,

And shine eternal in the sphere of fame,——

But my associates now my stay deplore, 395

Impatient on the hoarse-resounding shore.

Thou, heedful of advice, secure proceed;

My praise the precept is, be thine the deed.

The counsel of my friend (the youth rejoin'd)

Imprints conviction on my grateful mind. 400

So fathers speak (persuasive speech and mild)

Their sage experience to the fav'rite child.

But, since to part, for sweet refection due

The genial viands let my train renew:

And the rich pledge of plighted faith receive, 405

Worthy the heir of Ithaca to give.

Defer the promis'd boon (the goddess cries

Celestial azure bright'ning in her eyes)

And let me now regain the Reithrian port:

From Temesé return'd, your royal court 410

I shall revisit; and that pledge receive;

And gifts, memorial of our friendship, leave.

Abrupt, with eagle-speed she cut the sky;

Instant invisible to mortal eye.

The sense that *παρφοφόνευσ* here bears is remarkable, it signifies not only a person who kills his own father, but who kills the father of any other person. Eustathius.

v. 413. ———— *With eagle-speed she cut the sky;*  
*Instant invisible*———]

I pass over the several interpretations that have been given to the word *ἀνοματα*; some say it implies she flew up the chimney, &c. In reality it signifies a species of an eagle: but it may also signify the same as *ἀφανής* (invisible,) either of the senses are natural, or both together, "like an eagle she disappeared." Eustathius.



Then first he recogniz'd th' ætherial guest; 415  
 Wonder and joy alternate fire his breast:  
 Heroic thoughts, infus'd, his heart dilate:  
 Revolving much his father's doubtful fate,  
 At length, compos'd, he join'd the suitor-throng;  
 Hush'd in attention to the warbled song. 420  
 His tender theme the charming lyrist chose  
 Minerva's anger, and the direful woes  
 Which voyaging from Troy the victors bore,  
 While storms vindictive intercept the shore.  
 The shrilling airs the vaulted roof rebounds, 425  
 Reflecting to the queen the silver sounds.

*v. 420. Hush'd in attention to the warbled song.]* There may be two reasons why this is inserted; either the suitors were pleased with the sweetness of the song, or the subject of it; they sat attentive to hear the death of Ulysses, in the process of his story. This gives us a reason why immediately Penelope descended to stop the song; she feared lest he might touch upon the story of Ulysses, and say that he died in his return. This would have reduced her to the utmost necessity, and she could not have deferred to marry. Phemius would have certainly found credit, for poets were believed to be inspired by the gods; they were looked upon as prophets, and to have something of divinity in them, as appears from Demodocus in the eighth book of the Odyssey. Besides there was a further necessity to put a stop to the song. If Phemius had declared him to be dead, Penelope could not have avoided marriage; if alive, the suitors might have desisted, or armed themselves against Ulysses, and then their deaths, one of the principal incidents of the poem, could not have followed; neither could Telemachus have gone in search of his father, if he had foreknown his death, or sudden return. It is therefore artful in the poet to cut the song short; he reserves the story of Ulysses for future narration; and brings all this about by a very probable method, by the interposition of Penelope, who requests that some other story may be chosen, a story that she can hear without sorrow.

It is very customary for women to be present at the entertainments of men; as appears from the conduct of Helen, Arete, Nausicaa, and Penelope, in divers parts of the Odyssey: she is here introduced with the greatest decency; she enters not the room, but stands with tears at the threshold; and even at that distance appears with her face shaded by a veil. Eustathius.



With grief renew'd the weeping fair descends ;  
 Their sov'reign's step a virgin train attends :  
 A veil of richest texture wrought, she wears,  
 And silent to the joyous hall repairs. 430

There from the portal, with her mild command  
 Thus gently checks the minstrel's tuneful hand.

Phemius ! let acts of gods, and heroes old,  
 What ancient bards in hall and bow'r have told,  
 Attemper'd to the lyre, your voice employ ; 435  
 Such the pleas'd ear will drink with silent joy.  
 But oh ! forbear that dear, disastrous name,  
 To sorrow sacred, and secure of fame :  
 My bleeding bosom sickens at the sound,  
 And ev'ry piercing note inflicts a wound. 440

Why, dearest object of my duteous love,  
 (Reply'd the prince) will you the bard reprove ?  
 Oft', Jove's ætherial rays (resistless fire)  
 The chanter's soul and raptur'd song inspire ;  
 Instinct divine ! nor blame severe his choice, 445  
 Warbling the Grecian woes with harp and voice :  
 For novel lays attract our ravish'd ears ;  
 But old, the mind with inattention hears ;  
 Patient permit the sadly-pleasing strain ;  
 Familiar now with grief, your tears refrain, 450

v. 443. *Oft', Jove's ætherial rays, &c.*] Telemachus here re-  
 proves his mother for commanding Phemius to desist, or not to  
 make Ulysses the subject of his song : by saying, that it was not  
 in the poet's own power to chuse his subject, which was frequently  
 dictated and inspired by the gods. This is a particular instance of  
 the opinion the ancients held as to the immediate inspiration of  
 their poets. The words in the original evidently bear this sense.  
 " If the subject displease you, it is not the poet, but Jupiter is  
 " to blame, who inspires men of invention, as he himself pleases."  
 And Madam Dacier strangely mistakes this passage, in ren-  
 dering it, " it is not the poet, but Jupiter, who is the cause of  
 " our misfortunes, for it is he who dispenses to wretched mortals  
 " good or evil as he pleases." At the same time she acknow-  
 ledges the word *ἀλφειῶναι*, which she here renders " laborious, or  
 " wretched," to signify " persons of wit," in the beginning of  
 lib. vi. " and persons of skill and ability in their art," lib. xiii.



And in the public woe forget your own;  
 You weep not for a perish'd lord, alone.  
 What Greeks, now wand'ring in the Stygian gloom,  
 With your Ulysses shar'd an equal doom!  
 Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil 455  
 And various labours of the loom, beguile;  
 There rule, from palace-cares remote and free,  
 That care to man belongs, and most to me.

Mature beyond his years, the queen admires  
 His sage reply, and with her train retires. 460  
 Then swelling sorrows burst their former bounds,  
 With echoing grief afresh the dome resounds;  
 'Till Pallas, piteous of her plaintive cries,  
 In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.

Meantime, rekindl'd at the royal charms, 465  
 Tumultuous love each beating bosom warms;  
 Intemp'rate rage a wordy war began;  
 But bold Telemachus assum'd the man.  
 Instant (he cry'd) your female discord end,  
 Ye deedless boasters! and the song attend; 470  
 Obey that sweet compulsion, nor profane  
 With dissonance the smooth melodious strain.  
 Pacific now prolong the jovial feast;  
 But when the dawn reveals the rosy east,  
 I, to the peers assembled, shall propose 475  
 The firm resolve, I here in few disclose.

v. 455. *Your widow'd hours, apart, with female toil, &c.*  
 These verses are taken literally from the sixth book of the Iliad, except that *μῦθος* is inserted instead of *πόλεμος*; Eustathius explains the passage thus: "Women are not forbid intirely to speak, " for women are talking animals, *καλητὸν ζῶον*, they have the " faculty of talking, and indeed are rational creatures; but they " must not give too much liberty to that unruly member, in the " company of men. Sophocles advises well,

*Γύναι, γυναιξὶ κόσμον ἢ σιῆσι φέρει.*

" O woman, silence is the ornament of thy sex." Madam Dacier, though she plunders almost every thing, has spared this observation.



No longer live the cankers of my court;  
 All to your several states with speed resort;  
 Waste in wild riot what your land allows,  
 There ply the early feast, and late carouse. 480  
 But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed  
 For you my bowl shall flow, my flock shall bleed;  
 Judge and revenge my right, impartial Jove!—  
 By him and all th' immortal thrones above,  
 (A sacred oath) each proud oppressor, slain, 485  
 Shall with inglorious gore this marble stain.

Aw'd by the prince, thus haughty, bold, and young,  
 Rage gnaw'd the lip, and wonder chain'd the tongue.  
 Silence at length the gay Antinous broke,  
 Constrain'd a smile, and thus ambiguous spoke. 490  
 What god to your untutor'd youth affords  
 This headlong torrent of amazing words?

v. 491. *The speech of Antinous* ] Antinous and Eurymachus are Ithacensians, and are called the chief of the suitors. It is therefore necessary to distinguish their characters; Antinous is violent, and determined against Ulysses; Eurymachus more gentle and subtle; Antinous derides, Eurymachus flatters.

This speech of Antinous is a concealed raillery; he tells Telemachus, that Jove inspires his soul with wisdom, but means that his education has been such, that he had learned nothing from man; he wishes (out of a seemingly kind concern for him) that he may never reign in Ithaca, because the weight of a crown is a burden; and concludes with mentioning his hereditary title to it, to insinuate that it is his by descent only, and not by merit.

Telemachus, in his answer, wisely dissembles the affront of Antinous, he takes it in the better sense, and seems to differ only in opinion about the regality. Think you, says he, that to be a king is to be miserable? To be a king, in my judgment, is to enjoy affluence and honour. He asserts his claim to the succession of his father, yet seems to decline it, to lay the suspicions of the suitors asleep, that they may not prevent the measures he takes to obtain it. Eustathius.

The speech of Eurymachus confirms the former observation, that this suitor is of a more soft and moderate behaviour than Antinous: he cloaths ill designs with a seeming humanity, and appears a friend, while he carries on the part of an enemy: Telemachus had said, that if it was the will of Jupiter, he would



May Jove delay thy reign, and cumber late  
So bright a genius with the toils of state!

Those toils (Telemachus serene replies) 495  
Have charms, with all their weight, t' allure the wise.  
Fast by the throne obsequious fame resides,  
And wealth incessant rolls her golden tides.  
Nor let Antinous rage, if strong desire  
Of wealth and fame a youthful bosom fire: 500  
Elect by Jove his delegate of sway,  
With joyous pride the summons I'd obey.  
Whene'er Ulysses roams the realm of night,  
Shou'd factious pow'r dispute my lineal right,  
Some other Greeks a fairer claim may plead; 505  
To your pretence their title wou'd precede.  
At least, the scepter lost, I still shou'd reign  
Sole o'er my vassals, and domestic train.

To this Eurymachus. To heav'n alone  
Refer the choice to fill the vacant throne. 510  
Your patrimonial stores in peace possess;  
Undoubted all your filial claim confess:  
Your private right shou'd impious pow'r invade,  
The peers of Ithaca wou'd arm in aid.  
But say, that stranger-guest who late withdrew, 515  
What and from whence? his name and lineage shew.  
His grave demeanour, and majestic grace  
Speak him descended of no vulgar race:  
Did he some loan of antient right require,  
Or came fore-runner of your scepter'd fire? 520

ascend the throne of Ithaca: Eurymachus answers, that this was as the gods should determine; an insinuation that they regarded not his claim from his father. Telemachus said he would maintain himself in the possession of his present inheritance: Eurymachus wishes that no one may arrive to dispossess him: the latent meaning of which is, "we of your own country are sufficient for that design." If these observations of Eustathius be true, Eurymachus was not a less enemy than Antinous, but a better dissembler.



Oh son of Polybus! the prince replies,  
 No more my fire will glad these longing eyes:  
 The queen's fond hope inventive rumour cheers,  
 Or vain diviners' dreams divert her fears.  
 That stranger-guest the Taphian realm obeys, 525  
 A realm defended with incircling seas.

Mentes, an ever-honour'd name, of old  
 High in Ulysses' social list inroll'd.  
 Thus he, tho' conscious of th' ætherial guest,  
 Answer'd evasive of the sly request. 530

Meantime the lyre rejoins the sprightly lay;  
 Love-dittied airs, and dance, conclude the day.  
 But when the star of eve, with golden light  
 Adorn'd the matron-brow of sable night;  
 The mirthful train dispersing quit the court, 535  
 And to their several domes to rest resort.

A tow'ring structure to the palace join'd;  
 To this his steps the thoughtful prince inclin'd;  
 In his pavilion there, to sleep repairs;  
 The lighted torch, the sage Euryclea bears: 540  
 (Daughter of Ops, the just Pisenor's son,  
 For twenty beeves by great Laertes won;  
 In rosy prime with charms attractive grac'd,  
 Honour'd by him, a gentle lord and chaste,  
 With dear esteem: too wise, with jealous strife 545  
 To taint the joys of sweet, connubial life.

v. 540. *The sage Euryclea.*] Euryclea was a very aged person; she was bought by Laertes to nurse Ulysses; and in her old age attends Telemachus: she cost Laertes twenty oxen; that is, a certain quantity of money (ὕλης μεταλλικῆς) which would buy twenty oxen: or perhaps the form of an ox was stamped upon the metal, and from thence had its appellation.

The simplicity of these heroic times is remarkable, an old woman is the only attendant upon the son of a king: she lights him to his apartment, takes care of his cloaths, and hangs them up at the side of his bed. Greatness then consisted not in shew, but in the mind: this conduct proceeded not from the meanness of poverty, but from the simplicity of manners. Eustathius.



Sole with Telemachus her service ends,  
 A child she nurs'd him, and a man attends.)  
 Whilst to his couch himself the prince addrest,  
 The duteous dame receiv'd the purple vest: 550  
 The purple vest with decent care dispos'd,  
 The silver ring she pull'd, the door reclos'd;  
 The bolt, obedient to the filken cord,  
 To the strong staple's inmost depth restor'd,  
 Secur'd the valves. There, wrapt in silent shade, 555  
 Pensive, the rules the goddess gave, he weigh'd;  
 Stretch'd on the downy fleece, no rest he knows,  
 And in his raptur'd soul the vision glows.

Having now gone through the first book, I shall only observe to the reader, that the whole of it does not take up the compass of an intire day: when Minerva appears to Telemachus, the suitors were preparing to sit down to the banquet at noon; and the business of the first book concludes with the day. It is true, that the gods hold a debate before the descent of Minerva, and some small time must be allowed for that transaction. It is remarkable, that there is not one simile in this book, except we allow those three words to be one, ὄρνις δ' ὡς ἀνόπαια; the same observation is true of the first book of the Iliad. See the notes on that place.



# THE ODYSSEY.

## \* BOOK II.

### THE ARGUMENT.

The council of Ithaca.

*Telemachus, in the assembly of the lords of Ithaca, complains of the injustice done him by the suitors, and insists upon their departure from his palace; appealing to the princes, and exciting the people to declare against them. The suitors endeavour to justify their stay, at least till he shall send the queen to the court of Icarius her father; which he refuses. There appears a prodigy of two eagles in the sky, which an augur expounds to the ruin of the suitors. Telemachus then demands a vessel to carry him to Pylos and Sparta, there to enquire of his father's fortunes. Pallas in the shape of Mentor (an ancient friend of Ulysses) helps him to a ship, assists him in preparing necessaries for the voyage, and embarks with him that night; which concludes the second day from the opening of the poem.*

The scene continues in the palace of Ulysses in Ithaca.

**N**OW red'ning from the dawn, the morning-ray  
Glow'd in the front of heav'n, and gave the day.  
The youthful hero, with returning light,  
Rose anxious from th' inquietudes of night.

\* This book opens with the first appearance of Telemachus upon the stage of action. And Bossu observes the great judgment of the poet, in beginning with the transactions of Ithaca in the absence of Ulysses: by this method he sets the conduct of Telemachus, Penelope, and the suitors, in a strong point of light;



A royal robe he wore, with graceful pride, 5  
 A two-edg'd falchion threaten'd by his side,  
 Embroider'd sandals glitter'd as he trod,  
 And forth he mov'd, majestic as a god.  
 Then by his heralds, restless of delay,  
 To council calls the peers : the peers obey. 10  
 Soon as in solemn form th' assembly sat,  
 From his high dome himself descends in state.  
 Bright in his hand a pond'rous jav'lin shin'd ;  
 Two dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind ;

they all have a large share in the story of the poem, and consequently ought to have distinguishing characters. It is as necessary in epic poetry, as it is on the theatre, to let us immediately into the character of every person whom the poet introduces : this adds perspicuity to the story, and we immediately grow acquainted with each personage, and interest ourselves in the good or ill fortune that attends them through the whole relation.

Telemachus is now about twenty years of age : in the eleventh book, the poet tells us, he was an infant in the arms of his mother, when Ulysses sailed to Troy ; that hero was absent near twenty years, and from hence we may gather the exact age of Telemachus. He is every where described as a person of piety to the gods, of duty to his parents, and as a lover of his country : he is prudent, temperate, and valiant : and the poet well sets off the importance of this young hero, by giving him the goddess of war and wisdom for his constant attendant.

v. 13. ——— *In his band a pond'rous jav'lin shin'd.* ] The poet describes Telemachus as if he were marching against an enemy, or going to a council of war, rather than to an assembly of peers in his own country : two reasons are assigned for this conduct ; either this was the common usage of princes in those times, or Telemachus might look upon the suitors as enemies, and consequently go to council in arms as against enemies. Eustathius.

v. 14. *Two dogs, a faithful guard, attend behind.* ] This passage has not escaped the raillery of the critics ; they look upon it as a mean description of a hero and a prince, to give him a brace of dogs only for his guards or attendants : but such was the simplicity of ancient princes, that except in war they had rarely any attendants or equipage. And we may be confident Homer copies after the custom of the time, unless we can be so absurd as to suppose, he would feign low circumstances unnecessarily, through a want of judgment.

Virgil judged otherwise, and thought this circumstance worthy of his imitation.



Pallas with grace divine his form improves, 15  
And gazing crouds admire him as he moves.

His father's throne he fill'd : while distant stood  
The hoary peers, and aged wisdom bow'd.

'Twas silence all, at last Ægyptius spoke ;  
Ægyptius, by his age and sorrows broke : 20

A length of days his soul with prudence crown'd,  
A length of days had bent him to the ground.

His eldest \* hope in arms to Ilion came,  
By great Ulysses taught the path to fame ;

But (hapless youth) the hideous Cyclops tore 25  
His quiv'ring limbs, and quaff'd his spouting gore.

Three sons remain'd : to climb with haughty fires  
The royal bed, Eurynomus aspires ;

The rest with duteous love his griefs assuage,  
And ease the fire of half the cares of age. 30

Yet still his Antiphus he loves, he mourns,  
And as he stood, he spoke and wept by turns.

“ Quin etiam gemini custodes limine ab alto  
“ Procedunt, gressumque canes comitantur Herilem.”

Patroclus is described in the Iliad with the same attendants.

—— nine large dogs domestic at his board. B. xxiii.

Poetry, observes Dacier, is like painting, which draws the greatest beauties from the simplest customs : and even in history, we receive a sensible pleasure from the least circumstance that denotes the customs of ancient times. It may be added, that the poet, as well as the painter, is obliged to follow the customs of the age of which he writes, or paints : a modern dress would ill become Achilles or Ulysses, such a conduct would be condemned as an absurdity in painting, and ought to be so in poetry.

v. 31. *Yet still his Antiphus he loves, he mourns* ] Homer, says Eustathius, inserts these particularities concerning the family of Ægyptius, to give an air of truth to his story : it does not appear that Ægyptius knew the certainty of the death of Antiphus : (for it is the poet who relates it, and not the father ;) whence, as Dacier observes, should he learn it ? He only laments him, according to the prevailing opinion that all the companions of Ulysses were lost with Ulysses,

\* Antiphus.



Since great Ulysses fought the Phrygian plains,  
 Within these walls inglorious silence reigns.  
 Say then, ye peers ! by whose commands we meet ? 35  
 Why here once more in solemn council sit ?  
 Ye young, ye old, the weighty cause disclose :  
 Arrives some message of invading foes ?  
 Or say, does high necessity of state  
 Inspire some patriot, and demand debate ! 40  
 The present synod speaks its author wise ;  
 Assist him, Jove, thou regent of the skies !  
 He spoke. Telemachus with transport glows,  
 Embrac'd the omen, and majestic rose :  
 (His royal hand th' imperial scepter sway'd) 45  
 Then thus, addressing to Ægyptius, said.  
 Rev'rend old man ! lo here confess he stands  
 By whom ye meet ; my grief your care demands.  
 No story I unfold of public woes,  
 Nor bear advices of impending foes : 50

v. 33. *Since great Ulysses, &c.]* We here are told, that there never had been any council convened in Ithaca, since the departure of Ulysses. The general design and moral of the *Odyssey*, is to inform us of the mischievous effects which the absence of a king and father of a family produces : we deprive, as Bossu observes, the poem of its very soul, and spoil the fable, if we retrench from it the disorders which the suitors create in the absence of Ulysses, both in his family and dominions. Nothing can give us a greater image of those disorders, than what is here related : what must a kingdom suffer in twenty years without a ruler, without a council to make laws or punish enormities ? Such is the condition of Ithaca : Laertes is superannuated ; Penelope oppressed by the violence of the suitors ; and Telemachus to this time, in his minority.

It is very artful in the poet to open the assembly by Ægyptius : Telemachus was the person who convened it : and being the greatest personage present, it might be expected that he should open the design of it : but to give Telemachus courage, who was young and inexperienced, Ægyptius first rises, and by praising the person who had summoned them (of whom he seems ignorant) gives Telemachus to understand he has friends among the assembly : this he could no other way so safely have done, considering the power of the suitors. By this means Telemachus is encouraged to speak boldly, and arraign the disorders of the suitors with the utmost freedom.



Peace the blest land, and joys incessant crown ;  
 Of all this happy realm, I grieve alone.  
 For my lost fire, continual sorrows spring,  
 The great, the good ; your father, and your king.  
 Yet more ; our house from its foundation bows, 55  
 Our foes are pow'rful, and your sons the foes :  
 Hither, unwelcome to the queen they come ;  
 Why seek they not the rich Icarian dome ?  
 If she must wed, from other hands require  
 The dow'ry : is Telemachus her fire ? 60  
 Yet thro' my court the noise of revel rings,  
 And wastes the wise frugality of kings.  
 Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice ;  
 Scarce all my wine their midnight hours supplies.

v. 54. *Your father, and your king.*] Telemachus here sets the character of Ulysses, as a king, in the most agreeable point of light : he ruled his people with the same mildness as a father rules his children. This must needs have a very happy effect upon the audience ; not only as it shews Ulysses to have been a good governor ; but as it recalls the memory of the happiness they received from that mild government, and obliquely condemns them of ingratitude who had forgot it. By this method also the poet interests us deeply in the sufferings of Ulysses ; we cannot see a good man and good king in distress, without the most tender emotions.

v. 55. *Yet more ; our house, &c.*] What Telemachus here says, has given offence to the critics ; they think it indecent for a son to say, that he bears with more regret the disorder of his family than the loss of his father ; yet this objection will vanish, if we weigh Penelope, Telemachus, and his whole posterity, against the single person of Ulysses.

But what chiefly takes away this objection is, that Telemachus was still in hopes of his father's return : for ἀπώλεσα does not imply necessarily his death, but absence : and then both with justice and decency, Telemachus may say that he grieves more for the destruction of his family, than for the absence of Ulysses.

v. 63. *Scarce all my herds their luxury suffice.*] This passage is ridiculed by the critics ; they set it in a wrong light, and then grow very pleasant upon it : Telemachus makes a sad outcry because the suitors eat his sheep, his beeves and fatted goats ; and at last falls into tears. The truth is, the riches of kings and princes, in those early ages, consisted chiefly in flocks and cattle ; thus Æneas and Paris are described as tending their flocks, &c. and Abraham in the scriptures, as abounding in this kind of wealth.



Safe in my youth, in riot still they grow, 65  
 Nor in the helpless orphan dread a foe.  
 But come it will, the time when manhood grants  
 More pow'rful advocates than vain complaints.  
 Approach that hour! unfufferable wrong  
 Cries to the gods, and vengeance sleeps too long 70  
 Rise then, ye peers! with virtuous anger rise;  
 Your fame revere, but most th' avenging skies.  
 By all the deathless pow'rs that reign above,  
 By righteous Themis and by thund'ring Jove,  
 (Themis, who gives to councils, or denies 75  
 Success; and humbles, or confirms the wise)  
 Rise in my aid! suffice the tears that flow  
 For my lost fire, nor add new woe to woe.

These critics would form a different idea of the state and condition of Telemachus, if they considered that he had been capable to maintain no fewer than an hundred and eight persons in a manner very expensive for many years; for so many (with their attendants) were the suitors, as appears from the sixteenth book: and at the same time he kept up the dignity of his own court, and lived with great hospitality.

But it is a sufficient answer to the objections against this passage, to observe, that it is not the expence, but manner of it, that Telemachus laments: this he expressly declares by the word *μαψιδιος*; and surely a sober man may complain against luxury, without being arraigned of meanness; and against profusion, without being condemned for parsimony.

v. 75. *Themis, who gives to councils, or denies  
 Success; ———]*

Eustathius observes, that there was a custom to carry the statue of Themis to the assemblies in former ages, and carry it back again when those assemblies were dissolved; and thus Themis may be said to form, and dissolve an assembly. Dacier dislikes this assertion, as having no foundation in antiquity; she thinks that the assertion of Telemachus is general, that he intimates, it is justice alone that establishes the councils of mankind, and that injustice confounds and brings the wicked designs of men to confusion.

I have followed this interpretation, not only as it suits best with the usual morality of Homer, but also as Jupiter is mentioned with Themis; and no such custom is pretended concerning his statue. He is expressly stiled by the ancients *Zeũs άγοραις*. In Sicily there was an altar of *Zeũs άγοραις*, or of "Jupiter who presides over councils." Eustathius from Herodotus.



If e'er he bore the sword to strengthen ill,  
 Or having pow'r to wrong, betray'd the will, 80  
 On me, on me your kindled wrath assuage,  
 And bid the voice of lawless riot rage.

If ruin to our royal race ye doom,  
 Be you the spoilers, and our wealth consume.  
 Then might we hope redress from juster laws, 85  
 And raise all Ithaca to aid our cause :  
 But while your sons commit th' unpunish'd wrong,  
 You make the arm of violence too strong.

While thus he spoke, with rage and grief he frown'd,  
 And dash'd th' imperial scepter to the ground. 90  
 The big round tear hung trembling in his eye :  
 The synod griev'd, and gave a pitying sigh,  
 Then silent sat — at length Antinous burns  
 With haughty rage, and sternly thus returns.

O insolence of youth ! whose tongue affords 95  
 Such railing eloquence, and war of words.

v. 84. *Be you the spoilers, and our wealth consume.* ] To understand this passage, we must remember, as Eustathius remarks, that Telemachus is pleading his cause before the Ithacensians; them he constitutes the judges of his cause: he therefore prevents an answer which they might make, viz. “ We are not the men that  
 “ are guilty of these outrages;” Telemachus rejoins, “ It were  
 “ better for me to suffer from your hands; for by your quiescence  
 “ you make my affairs desperate;” — an intimation that they should rise in his defence.

v. 91. *The big round tear hung trembling in his eye.* ] This passage is not one of those, where the poet can be blamed for causing a hero to weep. If we consider the youth of Telemachus, together with the tenderness agreeable to that time of life; the subjects that demand his concern; the apprehension of the loss of a father; and the desolate state of his mother and kingdom: all these make his readiness to burst into tears an argument, not of any want of spirit in him, but of true sense, and goodness of nature; and is a great propriety, which shews the right judgment of the poet.

v. 95. *O insolence of youth ! &c.* ] We find Antinous always setting himself in the strongest opposition to Telemachus; and therefore he is the first that falls by the spear of Ulysses; the poet observes justice, and as Antinous is the first in guilt, he is the first in punishment. What Antinous says in this speech, concerning the treachery of the female servant of Penelope, prepares the way for



Studious thy country's worthies to defame,  
 Thy erring voice displays thy mother's shame.  
 Elusive of the bridal day, she gives  
 Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives. 100  
 Did not the sun, thro' heav'n's wide azure roll'd,  
 For three long years the royal fraud behold?  
 While she, laborious in delusion spread  
 The spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread:  
 Where as to life the wond'rous figures rise, 105  
 Thus spoke th' inventive queen, with artful sighs.  
 "Tho' cold in death Ulysses breathes no more,  
 "Cease yet a while to urge the bridal hour;

the punishment Ulysses inflicts on some of the maids in the conclusion of the poem: this is an act of poetical justice; and it is as necessary in epic as in tragic poetry, to reward the just, and punish the guilty. Eustathius.

v. 99. *Elusive of the bridal day, she gives  
 Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.*]

It will be necessary to vindicate the character of Penelope, the heroine of the poem, from the aspersion of Antinous. It must be confessed that she has a very hard game to play, she neither dares consent, nor deny; if she consents, she injures Ulysses, whom she still expects to return; if she denies, she endangers the throne, and the life of Telemachus, from the violence of the suitors; so that no other method is left to elude their addresses.

I must not conceal what Eustathius has mentioned from some authors, as Lycophron, &c. who say that Penelope was *ναρσώπιδα*, in plain English, an harlot: and he quotes Herodotus, as affirming that she had a son, named Pan, by Hermes; but the bishop declares it is all a scandal; and every body must conclude the same, from her conduct, as described in Homer.

To vindicate her in this place, we must consider who it is that speaks: Antinous, an unsuccessful lover: and what he blames as a crime, is really her glory; he blames her because she does not comply with their desires; and it had been an act of guilt to have complied. He himself sufficiently vindicates her in the conclusion of his speech, where he extols her above all the race of woman-kind: so that the seeming inconsistency of Penelope must be imputed to the necessity of her affairs: she is artful, but not criminal.

The original says, she deceived the suitors by her messages; a plain intimation, that she used no extraordinary familiarities with her admirers; and through the whole course of the poem she seldom appears in their assemblies.



" Cease, 'till to great Laërtes I bequeath  
 " A task of grief, his ornaments of death. 110  
 " Left when the fates his royal ashes claim,  
 " The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame ;  
 " When he, whom living mighty realms obey'd,  
 " Shall want in death a shroud to grace his shade."

Thus she : at once the gen'rous train complies, 115  
 Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise.  
 The work she ply'd ; but studious of delay,  
 By night revers'd the labours of the day.  
 While thrice the sun his annual journey made,  
 The conscious lamp the midnight fraud survey'd ; 120  
 Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail ;  
 The fourth, her maid unfolds th' amazing tale.  
 We saw, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,  
 The backward labours of her faithless hand.  
 Then urg'd, she perfects her illustrious toils ; 125  
 A wond'rous monument of female wiles !

But you, oh peers ! and thou, oh prince ! give ear  
 (I speak aloud, that every Greek may hear)  
 Dismiss the queen ; and if her fire approves,  
 Let him espouse her to the peer she loves : 130

v. 109. *Cease, 'till to great Laërtes I bequeath  
 A task of grief, his ornaments of death.*]

It was an ancient custom to dedicate the finest pieces of weaving and embroidery, to honour the funerals of the dead : and these were usually wrought by the nearest relations in their life-time. Thus in the twenty-second Iliad, Andromache laments, that the body of Hector must be exposed to the air, without those ornaments.

— — ἀτάρ τοι εἶματ' ἐνὶ μεγάροισι κέονται,  
 λεπλά τε καὶ χαριέντα, τέλει μέγα χερσὶ γυναικῶν.

And the mother of Euryalus in Virgil, to her son.

" — — — Nec te tua funera mater  
 " Produxi, pressive oculos, aut vulnera lavi,  
 " Veste tegens, tibi quam noctes festina diesque  
 " Urgebam, & tela curas solabar aniles."



Bid instant to prepare the bridal train,  
 Nor let a race of princes wait in vain,  
 Tho' with a grace divine her soul is blest,  
 And all Minerva breathes within her breast,  
 In wond'rous arts than woman more renown'd, 135  
 And more than woman with deep wisdom crown'd;  
 Tho' Tyro nor Mycene match her name,  
 Nor great Alcmena (the proud boasts of fame)  
 Yet thus by heav'n adorn'd, by heav'n's decree  
 She shines with fatal excellence, to thee: 140  
 With thee, the bowl we drain, indulge the feast,  
 'Till righteous heav'n reclaim her stubborn breast.  
 What tho' from pole to pole resounds her name!  
 The son's destruction waits the mother's fame:  
 For 'till she leaves thy court, it is decreed, 145  
 Thy bowl to empty, and thy flock to bleed.  
 While yet he speaks, Telemachus replies.  
 Ev'n nature starts, and what ye ask denies.

v. 140. *She shines with fatal excellence to thee.*] Eustathius observes, that Antinous, in the opening of his speech, throws the fault upon Penelope, to engage the favour of the multitude: but being conscious that he had said things which Penelope would resent, he extols her in the conclusion of it. He ascribes an obstinacy of virtue to her, and by this double conduct endeavours to make both Penelope and the multitude his friends.

v. 147. *Telemachus's reply.*] Telemachus every where speaks with an openness and bravery of spirit; this speech is a testimony of it, as well as his former; he answers chiefly to the dismissal of Penelope, says it would be an offence against heaven and earth; and concludes with a vehemence of expression, and tells Antinous that such a word, *μῦθον*, shall never fall from his tongue.

The criticks have found fault with one part of the speech, as betraying a spirit of avarice and meanness in Telemachus.

How to Icarius, in the bridal hour,  
 Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dow'r?

They think it unworthy of Telemachus to make the dower of Penelope an argument against her dismissal, and consequently ascribe his detention of her, not to duty, but to covetousness. To take away this objection, they point the verses in a different manner, and place a stop after *ἀποτίμειν*, and then the sense runs thus; "I cannot consent to dismiss her who bore me, and nursed me in my infancy,



Thus, shall I thus repay a mother's cares,  
 Who gave me life, and nurs'd my infant years? 150  
 While sad and foreign shores Ulysses treads,  
 Or glides a ghost with unapparent shades;  
 How to Icarius in the bridal hour  
 Shall I, by waste undone, refund the dow'r?  
 How from my father should I vengeance dread? 155  
 How would my mother curse my hated head?

“ while her husband is absent, or perhaps dead; besides, hard  
 “ would be the punishment I should suffer, if I should voluntarily  
 “ send away Penelope to Icarius.”

Dacier dislikes this solution, and appeals to the customs of those ages, to justify her opinion: if a son forced away his mother from his house, he was obliged to restore her dower, and all she brought in marriage to her husband: but if she retired voluntarily to engage in a second marriage, the dower remained with the son as lawful heir. This opinion of Dacier may be confirmed from Demosthenes in his orations, *ἢ μετὰ ταῦτα, ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς τελευτήσαντος, ἀπολιπῆσα τὸν οἶκον, ἢ κομισαμένη τὴν προίκα.* “ Afterwards upon the  
 “ decease of her husband, leaving his family, and receiving back  
 “ her portion,” &c. The same author adds, that the reason why the suitors are so urgent to send away Penelope, is, that she may chuse to marry some one of them, rather than return to Icarius; so that Telemachus only takes hold of their argument for her dismissal, in order to detain her. They addressed Penelope more for the sake of her riches than her beauty, (for she must be about forty years old) and he tells them, that if he sends her away against her consent, he must restore those riches, which they covet more than the person of Penelope. This I confess is very refined; and perhaps it may be sufficient to take off the objection of covetousness in Telemachus, to understand no more than what the words at the first view seem to imply, viz. an abhorrence of their riots, described by Telemachus to have arisen to such a degree as to have almost ruined his kingdom, and made their demands impossible. I see nothing unnatural or mean in this interpretation, especially if we remember that the prodigious disorders of his family enter into the essence of the poem. The greater the disorders are, the greater are the sufferings of Ulysses.

v. 155. *How from my father should I vengeance dread?*] There is an ambiguity in the word father; it may either signify Icarius or Ulysses, as Eustathius observes: but I think the context determines the person of Ulysses; for Telemachus believes him to be yet living, and consequently might fear his vengeance, if he offered any indignity to Penelope.



And while in wrath to vengeful fiends she cries,  
 How from their hell would vengeful fiends arise?  
 Abhorr'd by all, accurs'd my name would grow,  
 The earth's disgrace, and humankind my foe. 160  
 If this displease, why urge ye here your stay?  
 Haste from the court, ye spoilers, haste away:  
 Waste in wild riot what your land allows,  
 There ply the early feast, and late carouse.  
 But if, to honour lost, 'tis still decreed 165  
 For you my bowl shall flow, my flocks shall bleed;  
 Judge and assert my right, impartial Jove!  
 By him, and all th' immortal host above,  
 (A sacred oath) if heav'n the pow'r supply,  
 Vengeance I vow, and for your wrongs ye die. 170  
 With that, two eagles from a mountain's height  
 By Jove's command direct their rapid flight;

v. 157. *And while in wrath to vengeful fiends she cries,  
 How from their hell would vengeful fiends arise?*]

In the ninth Iliad we are told that the father of Phoenix imprecated the furies against his son.

My fire with curses loads my hated head,  
 And cries, "Ye furies! barren be his bed."  
 Infernal Jove, the vengeful fiends below,  
 And ruthless Proserpine, confirm'd his vow.

In the same book the furies hear the curses of Althea upon her son,

She beat the ground, and call'd the pow'rs beneath,  
 On her own son to wreak her brother's death.  
 Hell heard her curses from the realms profound,  
 And the fell fiends who walk the nightly round.

These passages shew the opinion the ancients had of the honour due from children to parents, to be such, that they believed there were furies particularly commissioned to punish those who failed in that respect, and to fulfil the imprecations made against them by their offended parents. There is a greatness in this idea, and it must have had an effect upon the obedience of the youth. We see Telemachus is full of the sense of it. Dacier.

v. 171, &c. *The prodgy of the two eagles.*] This prodigy is ushered in very magnificently, and the verses are lofty and sonorous. The eagles are Ulysses and Telemachus: "By Jove's command  
 "they fly from a mountain's height:" this denotes that the two



Swift they descend, with wing to wing conjoin'd,  
 Stretch their broad plumes, and float upon the wind.  
 Above th' assembled peers they wheel on high, 175  
 And clang their wings, and hov'ring beat the sky;  
 With ardent eyes the rival train they threat,  
 And shrieking loud, denounce approaching fate.  
 They cuff, they tear; their cheeks and neck they rend,  
 And from their plumes huge drops of blood descend:  
 Then sailing o'er the domes and tow'rs, they fly 181  
 Full tow'rd the east, and mount into the sky.

The wond'ring rivals gaze with cares oppress'd,  
 And chilling horrors freeze in ev'ry breast.  
 'Till big with knowledge of approaching woes 185  
 The prince of augurs, Halitherses, rose:  
 Prescient he view'd th' aërial tracks, and drew  
 A sure presage from ev'ry wing that flew.

Ye sons (he cry'd) of Ithaca, give ear,  
 Hear all! but chiefly you, oh rivals! hear. 190  
 Destruction sure o'er all your heads impends;  
 Ulysses comes, and death his steps attends.  
 Nor to the great alone is death decreed;  
 We, and our guilty Ithaca must bleed.

heroes are inspired by Jupiter, and come from the country to the destruction of the suitors: the eagles fly "with wing to wing conjoin'd;" this shews, that they act in concert and unity of councils: at first they "float upon the wind;" this implies the calmness and secrecy of the approach of those heroes: at last they "clang their wings, and hovering beat the skies;" this shews the violence of the assault: "With ardent eyes the rival train they threat." This, as the poet himself interprets it, denotes the approaching fate of the suitors. "Then sailing o'er the domes and tow'rs they fly Full tow'rd the east;" this signifies that the suitors alone are not doomed to destruction, but that the men of Ithaca are involved in danger, as Halitherses interprets it.

Nor to the great alone is death decreed;

We, and our guilty Ithaca must bleed.

See here the natural explication of this prodigy, which is very ingenious! Eustathius, verbatim.



Why cease we then the wrath of heav'n to stay? 195  
 Be humbled all, and lead, ye great! the way.  
 For lo! my words no fancy'd woes relate:  
 I speak from science, and the voice is fate.

When great Ulysses fought the Phrygian shores  
 To shake with war proud Ilion's lofty tow'rs, 200  
 Deeds then undone my faithful tongue foretold:  
 Heav'n seal'd my words, and you those deeds behold.  
 I see (I cry'd) his woes, a countless train;  
 I see his friends o'erwhelm'd beneath the main;  
 How twice ten years from shore to shore he roams; 205  
 Now twice ten years are past, and now he comes!

To whom Eurymachus——Fly, dotard, fly!  
 With thy wise dreams, and fables of the sky.  
 Go prophesy at home; thy sons advise:  
 Here thou art sage in vain—I better read the skies. 210  
 Unnumber'd birds glide thro' th' aerial way,  
 Vagrants of air, and unforeboding stray.

v. 203. *I see (I cry'd) his woes* ———

*I see his friends o'erwhelm'd, &c.]*

In three lines (observes Eustathius) the poet gives us the whole *Odyssey* in miniature; and it is wonderful to think, that so plain a subject should produce such variety in the process of it. Aristotle observes the simplicity of Homer's platform; which is no more than this: a prince is absent from his country; Neptune destroys his companions; in his absence his family is disordered by many princes that address his wife, and plot against the life of his only son; but at last after many storms he returns, punishes the suitors, and re-establishes his affairs: this is all that is essential to the poem, the rest of it is made up of episodes. And yet with what miracles of poetry (*speciosa miracula*, as Horace styles them) has he furnished out his poem?

v. 207. *The speech of Eurymachus.]* It has been observed, that Homer is the father of oratory as well as poetry, and it must be confessed, that there is not any one branch of it, that is not to be found in his poetry. The invective, persuasive, ironical, &c. may all be gathered from it. Nothing can be better adapted to the purpose than this speech of Eurymachus: he is to decry the credit of the predictions of Halitherses: he derides, he threatens, and describes him as a venal prophet. He is speaking to the multitude, and endeavours to bring Halitherses into contempt, and in order to it he uses him contemptuously.



Cold in the tomb, or in the deeps below  
 Ulysses lies : oh wert thou laid as low !  
 Then would that busy head no broils suggest, 215  
 Nor fire to rage Telemachus's breast.  
 From him some bribe thy venal tongue requires,  
 And int'rest, not the god, thy voice inspires.  
 His guideless youth, if thy experienc'd age  
 Mislead fallacious into idle rage, 220  
 Vengeance deserv'd thy malice shall repress,  
 And but augment the wrongs thou would'st redress.  
 Telemachus may bid the queen repair  
 To great Icarius, whose paternal care  
 Will guide her passion, and reward her choice, 225  
 With wealthy dow'r, and bridal gifts of price.  
 'Till she retires, determin'd we remain,  
 And both the prince and augur threat in vain :  
 His pride of words, and thy wild dream of fate,  
 Move not the brave, or only move their hate. 230  
 Threat on, oh prince ! elude the bridal day,  
 Threat on, 'till all thy stores in waste decay.  
 True, Greece affords a train of lovely dames,  
 In wealth and beauty worthy of our flames :  
 But never from this nobler suit we cease ; 235  
 For wealth and beauty less than virtue please.

To whom the youth. Since then in vain I tell  
 My num'rous woes, in silence let them dwell.  
 But heav'n, and all the Greeks, have heard my wrongs :  
 To heav'n, and all the Greeks, redress belongs. 240

v. 239. — *All the Greeks have heard my wrongs.*] It is necessary for the reader to carry in his mind, that this assembly consists not only of the peers, but of the people of Ithaca : for to the people Telemachus here appeals.

It is evident, that the place of the assembly was at least open to the air in the upper parts : for otherways how should the eagles be visible to the suitors ? and so very plainly, as to be discovered to threat them with their eyes ? There was no doubt a place set apart for council, usually in the market : for Telemachus is said to seat



Yet this I ask (nor be it ask'd in vain)  
 A bark to waft me o'er the rolling main ;  
 The realms of Pyle and Sparta to explore,  
 And seek my royal fire from shore to shore :  
 If, or to fame his doubtful fate be known, 245  
 Or to be learn'd from oracles alone ?  
 If yet he lives ; with patience I forbear,  
 'Till the fleet hours restore the circling year :  
 But if already wand'ring in the train  
 Of empty shades ; I measure back the main, 250  
 Plant the fair column o'er the mighty dead,  
 And yield his consort to the nuptial bed.

He ceas'd ; and while abash'd the peers attend,  
 Mentor arose, Ulysses' faithful friend :  
 [When fierce in arms he fought the scenes of war, 255  
 " My friend (he cry'd) my palace be thy care ;  
 " Years roll'd on years my God-like fire decay,  
 " Guard thou his age, and his behests obey."]

himself in his father's throne, in the beginning of this book : but Ulysses had been absent twenty years ; and therefore it is evident, that his throne had stood in the same place for the space of twenty years. It is past contradiction, that in Athens, and other cities of Greece, there were *Βαλεντήρια*, publick halls for the consultation of affairs.

v. 254. *Mentor arose, Ulysses' faithful friend.*] The name of Mentor is another instance of the gratitude of our poet's temper, it being the same which belonged to a friend of his by whom he was entertained in Ithaca, during a defluxion on his eyes which seized him in his voyages : and at whose house he is said to have laid the plan of this poem. This character of Mentor is well sustained by his speech, and by the assistance he gratefully gives to young Telemachus on all occasions.

v. 258. *Guard thou my fire, and his behests obey.*] The original says only, " Obey the old man." Eustathius rightly determines, that the expression means Laertes. The poet loses no opportunity of giving Ulysses an excellent character ; this is as necessary as continually to repeat the disorders of the suitors.

— — — — " Servetur ad imum  
 " Qualis ab incæpto processerit, & sibi constet."

This conduct contributes admirably to the design of the poem ; and when the poet in the unravelling of his fable comes to reward and



Stern as he rose, he cast his eyes around,  
That flash'd with rage ; and as he spoke, he frown'd.

O never, never more ! let king be just, 261  
Be mild in pow'r, or faithful to his trust !

Let tyrants govern with an iron rod,  
Oppress, destroy, and be the scourge of God ;

Since he who like a father held his rein, 265  
So soon forgot, was just and mild in vain !

True, while my friend is griev'd, his griefs I share ;  
Yet now the rivals are my smallest care :

They, for the mighty mischiefs they devise,  
E'er long shall pay — their forfeit lives the price. 270

But against you, ye Greeks ! ye coward train,  
Gods ! how my soul is mov'd with just disdain ?

Dumb ye all stand, and not one tongue affords  
His injur'd prince the little aid of words.

While yet he spoke, Leocritus rejoin'd : 275  
O pride of words, and arrogance of mind !

Would'st thou to rise in arms the Greeks advise ?  
Join all your pow'rs ! in arms, ye Greeks, arise !

Yet would your pow'rs in vain our strength oppose ;  
The valiant few o'ermatch an host of foes. 280

Should great Ulysses stern appear in arms,  
While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms ;

punish the chief actors, we acknowledge his justice in the death of the suitors, and re-establishment of Ulysses.

v. 282. *While the bowl circles, and the banquet warms.*] The original is not without obscurity, it says, *πρὸς Δαίτη* : or, "in the time of the banquet." Eustathius interprets it, *τὰ οἶνα σφαλν-γυῖλος αὐτοῖς*, "The wine as it were fighting on their side ;" and this agrees with what follows.

The design of this speech is to deter the people of Ithaca from rising in the cause of Ulysses : Mentor speaks justly ; Leocritus insolently ; Mentor sets before them the worth of Ulysses ; Leocritus the power of the suitors : Mentor speaks like a brave man ; Leocritus (observes Eustathius) like a coward, who wanting true courage, flies to the assistance of wine to raise a false one.

Perhaps it may be objected, that there is not a sufficient distinction in the characters of several suitors ; they are all described as



Tho' to his breast his spouse with transport flies,  
 Torn from her breast, that hour, Ulysses dies.  
 But hence retreating to your domes repair ; 285  
 To arm the vessel, Mentor ! be thy care,  
 And Halitherfes ! thine : be each his friend ;  
 Ye lov'd the father : go, the son attend.  
 But yet, I trust, the boaster means to stay  
 Safe in the court, nor tempt the wat'ry way. 290

Then, with a rushing sound, th' assembly bend,  
 Diverse their steps : the rival rout ascend  
 The royal dome ; while sad the prince explores  
 The neighb'ring main, and sorrowing treads the shores.  
 There, as the waters o'er his hands he shed, 295  
 The royal suppliant to Minerva pray'd.

O goddess ! who descending from the skies  
 Vouchsaf'd thy presence to my wond'ring eyes,  
 By whose commands the raging deeps I trace,  
 And seek my fire thro' storms and rolling seas ! 300  
 Hear from thy heav'ns above, oh warrior-maid !  
 Descend once more, propitious to my aid.

insolent voluptuaries. But though they agree in this general character, yet there is something distinguishing in the particular persons : thus Antinous derides, Eurymachus covers villainy with mildness ; Antinous is ever the foremost in outrage, Eurymachus generally his second : a greater distinction is neither necessary, nor possible to be represented. What the poet is to describe, is the insolence of the suitors, and the disorders they create in his family and kingdom ; he is obliged to dwell upon these circumstances, because they are essential to his design : and consequently that general resemblance of their characters is not a fault in the poet.

v. 291. *Then, with a rushing sound, &c.*] The assembly which was convened by Telemachus, is broke up in a riotous manner by Leocritus, who had no right to dissolve it. This agrees with the lawless state of the country in the absence of its king, and shews (says Eustathius) that the suitors had usurped the chief authority.

There is a fine contrast between the behaviour of Telemachus and that of the suitors. They return to repeat their disorders and debauches ; Telemachus retires to supplicate the goddess of wisdom, to assist him in his enterprises. Thus the poet raises the character of Telemachus ; he has shewed him to be a youth of a brave spirit, a good speaker, and here represents him as a person of piety.



Without thy presence, vain is thy command;  
Greece, and the rival train, thy voice withstand.

Indulgent to his pray'r, the goddess took 305  
Sage Mentor's form, and thus like Mentor spoke.

O prince, in early youth divinely wise,  
Born, the Ulysses of thy age to rise!

If to the son the father's worth descends,  
O'er the wide waves success thy ways attends: 310

To tread the walks of death he stood prepar'd,  
And what he greatly thought, he nobly dar'd.

Were not wise sons descendent of the wise,  
And did not heroes from brave heroes rise;

Vain were my hopes: few sons attain the praise 315  
Of their great fires, and most their fires disgrace.

But since thy veins paternal virtue fires,  
And all Penelope thy soul inspires:

Go, and succeed! the rivals aims despise;  
For never, never, wicked man was wise. 320

Blind they rejoice, tho' now, ev'n now they fall;  
Death hastes amain: one hour o'erwhelms them all!

And lo, with speed we plough the wat'ry way;  
My pow'r shall guard thee, and my hand convey:

The winged vessel studious I prepare, 325  
Thro' seas and realms companion of thy care.

Thou to the court ascend; and to the shores  
(When night advances) bear the naval stores;

Bread, that decaying man with strength supplies,  
And gen'rous wine, which thoughtful sorrow flies.

Meanwhile the mariners by my command 331  
Shall speed aboard, a valiant chosen band.

v. 307. *The speech of Minerva.*] This speech of Minerva is suited to encourage a young man to imitate the virtue of his father, and not to suffer himself to be overcome by any appearance of difficulties. She sets his father before his eyes, and tells him, there was never any danger which he durst not encounter; if he should suffer himself to be discouraged, he would prove himself an unworthy son of a brave father. Dacier, Eustathius.



Wide o'er the bay, by vessel vessel rides;  
The best I chuse to waft thee o'er the tides.

She spoke: to his high dome the prince returns, 335  
And as he moves, with royal anguish mourns.  
'Twas riot all, among the lawless train;  
Boar bled by boar, and goat by goat lay slain.  
Arriv'd, his hand the gay Antinous prest,  
And thus deriding, with a smile addrest. 340

Grieve not, oh daring prince! that noble heart;  
Ill suits gay youth the stern heroic part.  
Indulge the genial hour, unbend thy soul,  
Leave thought to age, and drain the flowing bowl.  
Studious to ease thy grief, our care provides 345  
The bark, to waft thee o'er the swelling tides.

Is this (returns the prince) for mirth a time?  
When lawless gluttons riot, mirth's a crime;  
The luscious wines, dishonour'd, lose their taste;  
The song is noise, and impious is the feast. 350  
Suffice it to have spent with swift decay  
The wealth of kings, and made my youth a prey.  
But now the wise instructions of the sage,  
And manly thoughts inspir'd by manly age,

v. 341. *Antinous's speech.*] This speech must be understood ironically: ἐπεὶ τε ἐπὶ τε is used as before, and has relation to the preceding harangues of Telemachus to the people, and his intended voyage; by way of derision Antinous bids him not trouble his brave spirit in contriving any more orations, or in any bold attempt to find out Ulysses; or to act the orator, or hero's part.

The critics have almost generally condemned these pieces of gaiety and raillery, as unworthy of heroic poetry: if ever they are proper, they must be so in the mouths of these suitors; persons of no serious or noble characters: mirth, wine, and feasting, is their constant employment; and consequently if they fall into absurdities, they act suitably to their characters. Milton, the best and greatest imitator of Homer, has followed him unworthily in this respect; I mean, has debased even this low raillery into greater lowness, by playing upon words and syllables. But in this place the raillery is not without its effect, by shewing the utmost contempt of Telemachus; and surely it is the lowest degree of calamity to be at once oppressed and despised.



Teach me to seek redress for all my woe, 355  
 Here, or in Pyle—in Pyle, or here, your foe.  
 Deny your vessels, ye deny in vain;  
 A private voyager I pass the main.  
 Free breathe the winds, and free the billows flow,  
 And where on earth I live, I live your foe. 360

He spoke and frown'd, nor longer deign'd to stay,  
 Sternly his hand withdrew, and strode away.

Meantime, o'er all the dome, they quaff, they feast,  
 Derisive taunts were spread from guest to guest,  
 And each in jovial mood his mate address. 365 }

Tremble ye not, oh friends! and coward fly,  
 Doom'd by the stern Telemachus to die:  
 To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies,  
 Big with revenge, the mighty warrior flies:  
 Or comes from Ephyré, with poisons fraught, 370  
 And kills us all in one tremendous draught?

Or who can say (his gamesome mate replies)  
 But while the danger of the deeps he tries,  
 He, like his fire, may sink depriv'd of breath,  
 And punish us unkindly by his death? 375  
 What mighty labours would he then create,  
 To seize his treasures, and divide his state,  
 The royal palace to the queen convey,  
 Or him she blesses in the bridal day!

v. 368. *To Pyle or Sparta to demand supplies.*] It is observable, says Eustathius, that the poet had in his choice several expedients to bring about the destruction of the suitors, but he rejects them, and chuses the most difficult method, out of reverence to truth, being unwilling to falsify the histories of Sparta and Pylos. This has a double effect; it furnishes the poet with a series of noble incidents; and also gives an air of probability to the story of Ulysses and Telemachus.

v. 378. *The royal palace to the queen convey.*] The suitors allot the palace to Penelope: it being, says Eustathius, the only thing they cannot consume; and adds, that the expression of the suitors, concerning the labour they should undergo in dividing the substance of Ulysses, shews the wealth and abundance of that hero.



Meantime the lofty rooms the prince surveys, 380  
 Where lay the treasures of th' Ithacian race:  
 Here ruddy brass and gold refulgent blaz'd;  
 There polish'd chests embroider'd vestures grac'd;  
 Here jars of oil breath'd forth a rich perfume;  
 There casks of wine in rows adorn'd the dome. 385  
 (Pure flav'rous wine, by gods in bounty giv'n,  
 And worthy to exalt the feasts of heav'n.)  
 Untouch'd they stood, 'till his long labours o'er,  
 The great Ulysses reach'd his native shore.

Dacier has found out an allusion between  $\phi\acute{o}\nu\alpha\iota$  in the first speech, and  $\omega\acute{o}\nu\epsilon\iota$  in the second; they differing only in one letter: she calls this a beauty, which she laments she cannot preserve in her translation. She is the only commentator that ever was quick-sighted enough to make the discovery. The words have no relation; they stand at a sufficient distance; and I believe Homer would have thought such trifling unworthy of his poetry. So that all the honour which accrues from that observation must be ascribed (in this case, as in many others) to the commentator, and not the author.

v. 381. *Where lay the treasures of th' Ithacian race.*] Such passages as these have ever furnished critics with matter of raillery; they think such household cares unworthy of a king, and that this conduct suits better with vulgar persons of less fortune. I confess, such descriptions now would be ridiculous in a poet, because unsuitable to our manners. But if we look upon such passages as pictures and exact representations of the old world, the reader will find a sensible pleasure in them.

It is a true observation, that the Iliad is chiefly suitable to the condition of kings and heroes; and consequently filled with circumstances in which the greatest part of mankind can have no concern or interest: the Odyssey is of more general use; the story of it is a series of calamities, which concern every man, as every man may feel them. We can bring the sufferings of Ulysses in some degree home to ourselves, and make his condition our own; but what private person can ever be in the circumstances of Agamemnon or Achilles? What I would infer from this is, that the reader ought not to take offence at any such descriptions, which are only mean as they differ from the fashions of the latter ages. In the Iliad, Achilles, when he acts in the common offices of life, and not as an hero, is liable to the same objections. But if the manners of the ancient ages be considered, we shall be reconciled to the actions of the ancient heroes; and consequently to Homer.



A double strength of bars secur'd the gates : 390  
 Fast by the door the wise Euryclea waits ;  
 Euryclea, who, great Ops ! thy lineage shar'd,  
 And watch'd all night, all day ; a faithful guard.

To whom the prince. O thou, whose guardian care  
 Nurs'd the most wretched king that breathes the air,  
 Untouch'd and sacred may these vessels stand, 396  
 'Till great Ulysses views his native land.

But by thy care twelve urns of wine be fill'd,  
 Next these in worth, and firm those urns be seal'd ;  
 And twice ten measures of the choicest flour 400  
 Prepar'd, ere yet descends the ev'ning hour.  
 For when the fav'ring shades of night arise,  
 And peaceful slumbers close my mother's eyes,  
 Me from our coast shall spreading sails convey,  
 To seek Ulysses thro' the wat'ry way. 405

While yet he spoke, she fill'd the walls with cries,  
 And tears ran trickling from her aged eyes.  
 Oh whither, whither flies my son ? she cry'd,  
 To realms, that rocks and roaring seas divide ?  
 In foreign lands thy father's days decay'd, 410  
 And foreign lands contain the mighty dead.  
 The wat'ry way ill-fated if thou try,  
 All, all must perish, and by fraud you die !  
 Then stay, my child ! storms beat, and rolls the main ;  
 Oh beat those storms, and roll the seas in vain ! 415

Far hence (reply'd the prince) thy fears be driv'n :  
 Heav'n calls me forth ; these counsels are of heav'n.

v. 394. ——— O thou, whose guardian care  
 Nurs'd the most wretched king ——— ]

Euryclea was not properly the nurse of Telemachus, but of Ulysses ; so that she is called so not in a strict sense, but as one concerned in his education from his infancy, and as a general appellation of honour. Telemachus here reserves the best wines for Ulysses ; a lesson (observes Eustathius) that even in the smallest matters we ought to pay a deference to our parents. These occasional and seemingly-trivial circumstances are not without their use, if not as poetical ornaments, yet as moral instructions.



But by the pow'rs that hate the perjur'd, swear,  
 To keep my voyage from the royal ear,  
 Nor uncompell'd the dang'rous truth betray, 420  
 'Till twice six times descends the lamp of day:  
 Lest the sad tale a mother's life impair,  
 And grief destroy what time a-while may spare.

Thus he. The matron with uplifted eyes  
 Attests th' all-seeing Sov'reign of the skies. 425  
 Then studious she prepares the choicest flour,  
 The strength of wheat, and wines an ample store.  
 While to the rival train the prince returns,  
 The martial goddess with impatience burns;  
 Like thee, Telemachus, in voice and size, 430  
 With speed divine from street to street she flies,  
 She bids the mariners prepar'd, to stand,  
 When night descends, embody'd on the strand.  
 Then to Noemon swift she runs, she flies,  
 And asks a bark: the chief a bark supplies. 435

v. 421. *'Till twice six times descends the lamp of day.*] It may be demanded how it was probable (if possible) that the departure of Telemachus could be concealed twelve days from the knowledge of so fond a mother as Penelope? It must be allowed, that this would not be possible, except in a time of such great disorder as the suitors created: Penelope confined herself almost continually within her own apartment, and very seldom appeared publicly; so that there is no improbability in this relation. Dacier.

Eustathius makes a criticism upon the words ἀπεινύουσι and ἐπρονύουσι, the former is used negatively, the latter affirmatively; namely, the former in swearing not to perform a thing, the latter to perform it.

v. 432. *She bids the mariners, &c.*] It is probable that this passage of Minerva preparing the mariners, &c. is thus to be understood: the men of Ithaca retaining in memory the speech of Telemachus, and believing that what he then said, and now requests, was agreeable to justice; and having as it were his image graven upon their hearts, voluntarily resolve to lend him assistance: so that Minerva is to be taken allegorically, to imply that it was every person's own reason that induced him to assist Telemachus. Eustathius.

v. 435. *Noemon ——— the bark supplies.*] It may be asked why this particularity is necessary, and may it not be thought that such a little circumstance is insignificant? The answer is, that a



And now, declining with his sloping wheels,  
 Down sunk the sun behind the western hills.  
 The goddess shov'd the vessel from the shores,  
 And stow'd within its womb the naval stores.  
 Full in the op'nings of the spacious main 440  
 It rides; and now descends the sailor-train.

Next, to the court, impatient of delay,  
 With rapid step the goddess urg'd her way:  
 There ev'ry eye with slumb'rous chains she bound,  
 And dash'd the flowing goblet to the ground. 445  
 Drowsy they rose, with heavy fumes oppress'd,  
 Reel'd from the palace, and retir'd to rest.

Then thus, in Mentor's rev'rend form array'd,  
 Spoke to Telemachus the martial maid.  
 Lo! on the seas, prepar'd, the vessel stands, 450  
 Th' impatient mariner thy speed demands.  
 Swift as she spoke, with rapid pace she leads;  
 The footsteps of the deity he treads.  
 Swift to the shore they move: along the strand  
 The ready vessel rides, the sailors ready stand. 455

great deal depends upon this particularity; no less than the discovery of the voyage of Telemachus to the suitors; and consequently, whatever the suitors act in order to intercept him, takes its rise from this little incident; the fountain is indeed small, but a large stream of poetry flows from it.

v. 444. *There ev'ry eye with slumb'rous chains she bound.*] The words in the original are *εὔδειν* and *ὑπνος*, which are not to be taken for being asleep, but drowsy; this is evident from the usage of *καθεύδειν*, in the conclusion of the first book of the Iliad, where the signification has been mistaken by most translators: they make Jupiter there to be asleep; though two lines afterwards, in the second book, Homer expressly says,

Th' immortals slumber'd on their thrones above:

All, but the ever-waking eyes of Jove.

It may be asked how Minerva can be said to occasion this drowsiness in the suitors, and make them retire sooner than usual? Eustathius replies, that the person who furnished the wine supplied it in greater quantities than ordinary, through which wine they contracted a drowsiness: in this sense Minerva, or wisdom, may be said to assist the designs of Telemachus.



He bids them bring their stores; th' attending train  
 Load the tall bark, and lanch into the main.  
 The prince and goddess to the stern ascend;  
 To the strong stroke at once the rowers bend.  
 Full from the west she bids fresh breezes blow; 460  
 The sable billows foam and roar below.  
 The chief his orders gives; th' obedient band  
 With due observance wait the chief's command;  
 With speed the mast they rear, with speed unbind  
 The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind. 465  
 High o'er the roaring waves the spreading sails  
 Bow the tall mast, and swell before the gales;  
 The crooked keel the parting surge divides,  
 And to the stern retreating roll the tides.  
 And now they ship their oars, and crown with wine  
 The holy goblet to the pow'rs divine: 471

v. 460. ——— *She bids fresh breezes blow.*] This also is an allegory, and implies that the sailors had the experience and art to guide the ship before the winds; but poetry, that delights to raise every circumstance, exalts it into the marvellous, and ascribes it to the goddess of wisdom. Eustathius.

v. 464. *With speed the mast they rear.*] It is observable, that Homer never passes by an opportunity of describing the sea, or a ship under sail; and in many other places, as well as in this, he dwells largely upon it: I take the reason to be, not only because it furnished him with variety of poetical images, but because he himself having made frequent voyages, had a full idea of it, and consequently was delighted with it: this is evident from his conduct in the Iliad, where variety of allusions and similitudes are drawn from the sea, and are not the smallest ornaments of his poetry.

v. 470. ——— *And crown with wine*

*The holy goblet to the pow'rs divine.*]

This custom of libations was frequent upon all solemn occasions, before meat, before sleep, voyages, journies, and in all religious rites, sacrifices, &c. They were always made with wine, pure and unmixed, whence *ἀκρατος* is a word frequent in ancient authors. Sometimes they used mixed wines in sacrifices; but Eustathius says, that this mixture was of wine with wine, and not of wine with water; hence came the distinction of *ἐνσπονδον* and *ἀσπονδον*, the unlawful and lawful libation; wine unmixed was lawful, the mixed unlawful. Homer in this place uses



Imploring all the gods that reign above,  
But chief, the blue-ey'd progeny of Jove.

Thus all the night they stem the liquid way,  
And end their voyage with the morning ray. 475

*ἐπισεφέας κρητῆρας*, or goblets crowned with wine; that is, filled till the wine stood above the brim of the goblet; they esteemed it an irreverence to the gods not to fill the cups full, for then only they esteemed the libation whole and perfect, ὅλον καὶ τέλειον.

This book takes up the space of one day and one night: it opens with the morning; the speeches in the council, with the preparations for the voyage of Telemachus, are the subject of the day; and the voyage is finished by the next morning. By this last circumstance we may learn that Ithaca was distant from Pylos but one night's voyage, nay something less, there being some time spent after the setting of the sun, in carrying the provisions from the palace to the vessel.

The book consists chiefly in the speeches of Telemachus and his friends against those of the suitors. It shews the great judgment of the poet in chusing this method: hence we see the causes preceding the effects, and know from what spring every action flowed: we are never at a loss for a reason for every incident; the speeches are as it were the ground-work upon which he builds all that relates to the adventures of Telemachus.

In the Iliad, after the dissolution of the council in the first book, and the dissension between Agamemnon and Achilles, we immediately see upon what hinge the fable turns. So in the Odyssey, after the poet has laid before us the warm debates between the suitors and Telemachus, we immediately expect them to act as enemies: the war is declared, and we become judges as well as spectators of the scenes of action. Thus Homer adds the perspicuity of history to the ornaments of poetry.







# THE ODYSSEY.

## \* BOOK III.

### THE ARGUMENT.

The interview of Telemachus and Nestor.

*Telemachus, guided by Pallas in the shape of Mentor, arrives in the morning at Pylos, where Nestor and his sons are sacrificing on the sea-shore to Neptune. Telemachus declares the occasion of his coming, and Nestor relates what past in their return from Troy, how their fleets were separated, and he never since heard of Ulysses. They discourse concerning the death of Agamemnon, the revenge of Orestes, and the injuries of the suitors. Nestor advises him to go to Sparta, and inquire further of Menelaus. The sacrifice ending with the night, Minerva vanishes from them in the form of an eagle: Telemachus is lodged in the palace. The next morning they sacrifice a bullock to Minerva, and Telemachus proceeds on his journey to Sparta, attended by Pisistratus.*

The scene lies on the sea-shore of Pylos.

**T**HE sacred sun, above the waters rais'd,  
Thro' heav'n's eternal brazen portals blaz'd;  
And wide o'er earth diffus'd his chearing ray,  
To gods and men to give the golden day.

\* The scene is now removed from Ithaca to Pylos, and with it a new vein of poetry is opened: instead of the riots of the suitors, we are entertained with the wisdom and piety of Nestor. This and the following book are a kind of supplement to the Iliad; the nature of epic poetry requires that something should



Now on the coast of Pyle the vessel falls, 5  
 Before old Neleus' venerable walls.

There, suppliant to the monarch of the flood,  
 At nine green theatres the Pylians stood.

be left to the imagination of the reader, nor is the picture to be intirely drawn at full length. Homer therefore, to satisfy our curiosity, gives an account of the fortunes of those great men, who made so noble a figure at the siege of Troy. This conduct also shews his art: variety gives life and delight; and it is much more necessary in epic than in comic or tragic poetry, sometimes to shift the scenes, to diversify and embellish the story. But as on the stage the poet ought not to step at once from one part of the world to a too remote country (for this destroys credibility, and the auditor cannot fancy himself this minute here, and the next a thousand miles distant) so in epic poetry, every removal must be within the degrees of probability. We have here a very easy transition; the poet carries his hero no farther than he really might sail in the compass of time he allots for his voyage. If he had still dwelt upon the disorders of the suitors without interruption, he must grow tiresome; but he artfully breaks the thread of their story with beautiful incidents and episodes, and reserves the further recital of their disorders for the end of his poem: by this means we sit down with fresh appetite to the entertainment, and rise at last not cloyed, but satisfied.

v. 2. *Tbro' heav'n's eternal, brazen portals —*] The original calls heaven *πολύχαλκον*, or brazen; the reason of it arises either from the palaces of the gods being built of brass by Vulcan; or rather the word implies no more than the stability of heaven, which in other places is called *Σιδήρειον*, or framed of iron. Eustathius.

v. 8. *At nine green theatres.*] It may be asked why the poet is so very particular as to mention that the Pylians were divided into nine assemblies; and may it not seem a circumstance of no importance? Eustathius answers from the ancients, that there were nine cities subject to the power of Nestor, five in Pylos, the rest in Bœotia: the poet therefore allots one bank or theatre to every city, which consisted of five hundred men, the whole number amounting to four thousand five hundred: these cities furnished the like complement of men to Nestor for the war at Troy: he sailed in ninety vessels, and allowing fifty men to each vessel, they amount to that number. Hence it appears that this was a national sacrifice, every city furnished nine bulls, and by consequence the whole nation were partakers of it.

v. 8. *The sacrifice of the Pylians.*] This was a very solemn sacrifice of the Pylians: how comes it then to pass, that Homer passes it over in one line? Eustathius answers, that the occasion disallows a longer description, and Homer knows when to speak,



Each held five hundred (a deputed train)  
 At each, nine oxen on the sand lay slain. 10  
 They taste the entrails, and the altars load  
 With smoking thighs, an off'ring to the god.  
 Full for the port the Ithacensians stand,  
 And furl their sails, and issue on the land.  
 Telemachus already prest the shore; 15  
 Not first, the pow'r of wisdom march'd before,  
 And e'er the sacrificing throng he join'd,  
 Admonish'd thus his well attending mind.

Proceed, my son! this youthful shame expel;  
 An honest business never blush to tell. 20  
 To learn what fates thy wretched fire detain,  
 We past the wide, immeasurable main.  
 Meet then the senior far renown'd for sense,  
 With rev'rend awe, but decent confidence:  
 Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies; 25  
 And sure he will: for wisdom never lies.

and when to be silent. He chuses to carry on the adventures of Telemachus, rather than amuse himself in descriptions that contribute nothing to the story; he finds a time of more leisure in the latter part of this book, and there he describes it at length.

v. 11. *They taste the entrails.*] That is, every person eat a small portion of the sacrifice, and by this method every person became partaker of it.

There is nothing in Homer that shews where this sacrifice was offered, whether in a temple, or in the open air. But Eustathius tells us from Strabo, that it was in the temple of Samian Neptune, ἐν ἱερῷ Σαμιαῖ Ποσειδῶν.

v. 25. *Urge him with truth to frame his fair replies;  
 And sure he will: for wisdom never lies.*]

This sentiment is truly noble, and as nobly expressed: the simplicity of the diction corresponds with that of the thought. Homer in many places testifies the utmost abhorrence of a lie. This verse is twice repeated in the present book, as in some others; and nothing can be stronger in the same view than that of Achilles in the ninth Iliad:

Who dares think one thing, and another tell,  
 My heart detests him as the gates of hell.



Oh tell me, Mentor ! tell me, faithful guide,  
 (The youth with prudent modesty reply'd)  
 How shall I meet, or how accost the sage,  
 Unskill'd in speech, nor yet mature of age ? 30  
 Awful th' approach, and hard the task appears,  
 To question wisely men of riper years.

To whom the martial goddess thus rejoin'd.  
 Search, for some thoughts, thy own suggesting mind ;  
 And others, dictated by heav'nly pow'r, 35  
 Shall rise spontaneous in the needful hour.

For nought unprosp'rous shall thy ways attend,  
 Born with good omens, and with heav'n thy friend.

She spoke, and led the way with swiftest speed :  
 As swift, the youth pursu'd the way she led ; 40  
 And join'd the band before the sacred fire,  
 Where sat, encompast with his sons, the fire.  
 The youth of Pylos, some on pointed wood  
 Transfix'd the fragments, some prepar'd the food.  
 In friendly throngs they gather to embrace 45  
 Their unknown guests, and at the banquet place.  
 Pisistratus was first, to grasp their hands,  
 And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands ;

v. 38. *Born with good omens, and with heav'n thy friend.*] There is some obscurity in the Greek expression, and the ancient critics have made it more obscure by their false interpretations ; they imagine that the poet only meant to say, that Telemachus was the legitimate son of Penelope and Ulysses. Eustathius.

Dacier very justly condemns this explication, as unworthy of Homer ; and gives us a more plain and natural interpretation, viz. " You were not born in despite of the gods ; that is, you are well made, and of a good presence, you have good inclinations, and in a word, your birth is happy." She explains *τραφέμεν* after the same manner. " You were not educated in despite of the gods ;" that is, " the gods have blessed your education." This explication seems to be just, and answers perfectly the design of Minerva ; which was to give a decent assurance to Telemachus : you are a person, says the goddess, of a good presence, and happy education, why then should you be ashamed to appear before Nestor ?

v. 48. *And spread soft hides upon the yellow sands.*] It is with great pleasure that I read such passages in an author of so great an-



Along the shore th' illustrious pair he led,  
 Where Nestor sat with youthful Thrasymed. 50  
 To each a portion of the feast he bore,  
 And held a golden goblet foaming o'er;  
 Then first approaching to the elder guest,  
 The latent goddess in these words addrest.  
 'Whoe'er thou art, whom fortune brings to keep 55  
 These rites of Neptune, monarch of the deep,  
 Thee first it fits, oh stranger! to prepare  
 The due libation and the solemn pray'r:  
 Then give thy friend to shed the sacred wine:  
 Tho' much thy younger, and his years like mine, 60  
 He too, I deem, implores the pow'rs divine:  
 For all mankind alike require their grace,  
 All born to want; a miserable race!

He spake, and to her hand preferr'd the bowl:  
 A secret pleasure touch'd Athena's soul, 65  
 To see the pref'rence due to sacred age  
 Regarded ever by the just and sage.  
 Of ocean's king she then implores the grace.  
 Oh thou! whose arms this ample globe embrace,

tiquity, as are pictures of the simplicity of those heroic ages: it is the remark of Eustathius, that Pisistratus the son of a king does not seat these strangers upon purple tapestry, or any other costly furniture, but upon the skins of beasts, that had nothing to recommend them but their softness; being spread upon the sand of the sea-shores.

This whole passage pleases me extremely; there is a spirit of true devotion, morality and good sense in it; and the decency of behaviour between Nestor and Telemachus is described very happily: Nestor shews great benevolence to Telemachus; Telemachus great reverence to Nestor: the modesty of the one, and the humanity of the other, are worthy of our observation. We see the same picture of Nestor in the *Odyssey*, that was drawn of him in the *Iliad*, with this only difference, that there he was a counsellor of war, here he is painted in softer colours, ruling his people in peace, and diffusing a spirit of piety through his whole territories. He had now survived the war of Troy almost ten years; and the gods reward the old age of this wise and religious prince with peace and happiness.



Fulfil our wish, and let thy glory shine 70  
 On Nestor first, and Nestor's royal line ;  
 Next grant the Pyliaſtates their juſt deſires,  
 Pleas'd with their hecatomb's aſcending fires ;  
 Laſt deign Telemachus and me to bleſs,  
 And crown our voyage with deſir'd ſucceſs. 75

Thus ſhe ; and having paid the rite divine,  
 Gave to Ulyſſes' ſon the roſy wine.  
 Suppliant he pray'd. And now the victims dreſt  
 They draw, divide, and celebrate the feaſt.  
 The banquet done, the narrative old man, 80  
 Thus mild, the pleaſing conference began.

Now, gentle gueſts ! the genial banquet o'er,  
 It fits to aſk ye, what your native ſhore,  
 And whence your race ? on what adventure, ſay,  
 Thus far ye wander thro' the wat'ry way ? 85  
 Relate, if buſineſs, or the thirſt of gain,  
 Engage your journey o'er the pathleſs main :

v. 74. *Laſt deign Telemachus and me to bleſs —*] Since Minerva here mentions the name of Telemachus in her prayer ; how comes it to paſs, that Neſtor is at a loſs to know Telemachus ? Minerva ſat cloſe by Neſtor ; he muſt therefore be ſuppoſed to hear the prayer ; and yet in the following lines he enquires who theſe ſtrangers are ? We can ſcarce imagine Neſtor ignorant that the ſon of Ulyſſes was named Telemachus, there being ſo ſtrict a friendship between Neſtor and Ulyſſes. Perhaps therefore Minerva prayed in ſecret mentally ; or perhaps Neſtor might not take notice of what was not addreſſed immediately to him, and conſequently make inquiry about it for the greater certainty.

v. 86. *Relate, if buſineſs, or the thirſt of gain, &c.*] If we form our images of perſons and actions in ancient times, from the images of perſons and actions in modern ages, we ſhall fall into great miſtakes : thus in the preſent paſſage, if we annex the ſame idea of piracy, as it was practiſed three thouſand years paſt, to piracy as it is practiſed in our ages ; what can be a greater affront than this inquiry of Neſtor ? But, ſays Euſtathius, piracy was formerly not only accounted lawful, but honourable. I doubt not but Thucydides had this paſſage in view, when he ſays, that the ancient poets introduce men inquiring of thoſe who frequent the ſea, if they be pirates, as a thing no way ignominious. Thucydides tells us in the ſame place, that all thoſe who lived on the ſea-coaſt, or in the iſlands, maintained themſelves by frequent inroads upon unfortified



Where savage pirates seek thro' seas unknown  
The lives of others, vent'rous of their own.

Urg'd by the precepts by the goddess giv'n 90

And fill'd with confidence infus'd from heav'n,

The youth, whom Pallas destin'd to be wise

And fam'd among the sons of men, replies.

Inquir'st thou, father! from what coast we came?

(Oh grace and glory of the Grecian name!) 95

From where high Ithaca o'erlooks the floods,

Brown with o'er-arching shades and pendent woods,

Us to these shores our filial duty draws,

A private sorrow, not a public cause.

My fire I seek, where-e'er the voice of fame 100

Has told the glories of his noble name,

The great Ulysses; fam'd from shore to shore

For valour much, for hardy suff'ring more.

Long time with thee before proud Ilion's wall

In arms he fought; with thee beheld her fall. 105

Of all the chiefs, this hero's fate alone

Has Jove reserv'd, unheard of, and unknown;

Whether in fields by hostile fury slain,

Or sunk by tempests in the gulfy main?

Of this to learn, oppress'd with tender fears, 110

Lo, at thy knee his suppliant son appears.

If or thy certain eye, or curious ear,

Have learnt his fate, the whole dark story clear:

And oh! whate'er heav'n destin'd to betide,

Let neither flatt'ry smooth, nor pity hide. 115

Prepar'd I stand: he was but born to try

The lot of man; to suffer, and to die.

Oh then, if ever thro' the ten years war

The wise, the good Ulysses claim'd thy care;

towns, and if such piracies were nobly performed, they were accounted glorious. Herodotus also writes, that many of the ancients, especially about Thrace, thought it ignominious to live by labouring the ground, but to live by piracy and plunder was esteemed a life of honour. Eustathius.



If e'er he join'd thy council, or thy sword, 120  
 True in his deed, and constant to his word;  
 Far as thy mind thro' backward time can see,  
 Search all thy stores of faithful memory :  
 'Tis sacred truth I ask, and ask of thee.

To him experienc'd Nestor thus rejoin'd. 125  
 O friend ! what sorrows dost thou bring to mind ?  
 Shall I the long, laborious scene review,  
 And open all the wounds of Greece anew ?  
 What toils by sea ! where dark in quest of prey  
 Dauntless we rov'd ; Achilles led the way : 130  
 What toils by land ! where mixt in fatal fight  
 Such numbers fell, such heroes sunk to night :  
 There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave,  
 There wise Patroclus, fill an early grave :

v. 125. *The speech of Nestor.*] Eustathius observes the modesty of Nestor : Telemachus had ascribed the fall of Troy in a great measure to Nestor ; but Nestor speaks not in particular of himself, but is content with his share of glory in common with other warriors ; he speaks in the plural number, and joins all the Greeks as in the war, so in the glory of it. Nestor mentions the sufferings of the Greeks by sea, as well as by land, during the siege of Troy : to understand this, it is necessary to remember, that the Greeks made many expeditions against other places during the war, both by sea and land, as appears from many passages in the Iliad, particularly from what Achilles says in the ninth book.

v. 133. *There Ajax great, Achilles there the brave.*] I have observed, that the poet inserts into the Odyssey several incidents that happened after the fall of Troy, and by that method agreeably diversifies his poetry, and satisfies the curiosity of the reader. Eustathius remarks here, that he gives a title of honour to all the heroes he mentions, except only to Achilles. Achilles had been the occasion of the sufferings and death of many of the Greeks by his anger, and obstinacy in refusing to obey Agamemnon ; therefore while Nestor is lamenting the calamities of the Greeks, he passes over Achilles without any honourable mention, who had so greatly added to their sufferings. But I think this remark chimerical : one may as well say Achilles needed no epithet to distinguish him.

It is with pleasure I see the old man dwell upon the praise of Antilochus : the father enlarges upon the fame of the son ; he gives him four epithets of glory ; and while Ajax is only praised as a warrior, Antilochus is great and good, excellent in the standing fight, or swift to pursue an enemy. Longinus has observed upon the beauty of this passage.



There too my son — ah once my best delight, 135  
 Once swift of foot, and terrible in fight,  
 In whom stern courage with soft virtue join'd,  
 A faultless body, and a blameless mind:  
 Antilochus — what more can I relate?  
 How trace the tedious series of our fate? 140  
 Not added years on years my task could close,  
 The long historian of my country's woes:  
 Back to thy native islands might'st thou sail,  
 And leave half-heard the melancholy tale.  
 Nine painful years on that detested shore; 145  
 What stratagems we form'd, what toils we bore?  
 Still lab'ring on, 'till scarce at last we found  
 Great Jove propitious, and our conquest crown'd.  
 Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd,  
 In wit, in prudence, and in force of mind. 150  
 Art thou the son of that illustrious sire?  
 With joy I grasp thee, and with love admire.  
 So like your voices, and your words so wise,  
 Who finds thee younger must consult his eyes.  
 Thy fire and I were one; nor vary'd ought 155  
 In public sentence, or in private thought;  
 Alike to council or th' assembly came,  
 With equal souls, and sentiments the same.

v. 149. *Far o'er the rest thy mighty father shin'd.*] Nestor speaks of Ulysses as an inseparable friend; and it shews an excellent disposition in them both, to be rivals, and yet without envy. But the art of Nestor is remarkable; he first gives the character to Ulysses of being superiour in wisdom to all the Greeks; and yet at last he finds a way secretly to set himself on a level with him, if not above him: we ever, says he, thought the same thoughts, and were ever of the same sentiments; which though it may imply that they were of equal wisdom, yet there is room left for it to signify, that Ulysses always assented to the wisdom of Nestor. Eustathius.

v. 157. *The council or the assembly.*] There is a remarkable difference between *βουλὴ* and *ἀγορὰ*. The former denotes a select number of men assembled in council, the latter a public assembly where all the people were present. Eustathius.



But when (by wisdom won) proud Ilion burn'd,  
 And in their ships the conqu'ring Greeks return'd; 160  
 'Twas God's high will the victors to divide,  
 And turn th' event, confounding human pride:  
 Some he destroy'd, some scatter'd as the dust,  
 (Not all were prudent, and not all were just)  
 Then Discord, sent by Pallas from above, 165  
 Stern daughter of the great avenger Jove,  
 The brother-kings inspir'd with fell debate;  
 Who call'd to council all th' Achaian state,  
 But call'd untimely (not the sacred rite  
 Observ'd, nor heedful of the setting light, 170

v. 165. *Sent by Pallas* —] Nestor in modesty conceals the reason of the anger of the goddess; out of respect to Ajax the Locrian, who was then dead: the crime of Ajax was the violation of Cassandra even in the temple of Minerva before her image. But why should the goddess be angry at others for the crime of Ajax? This is because they omitted to punish the offender. If Ajax was criminal in offending, others are criminal for not punishing the offence. Eustathius.

The crime of Ajax is mentioned in Virgil, *Æn.* i.

— — “Pallasnè exurere classēm

“Argivûm, atque ipsos potuit submergere ponto,

“Unius ab noxam, & furias Ajacis Oilei?” &c.

Could angry Pallas with revengeful spleen

The Grecian navy burn, and drown the men?

She for the fault of one offending foe,

The bolts of Jove himself presum'd to throw. Dryd.

Virgil borrowed the description of the punishment of Ajax from the fourth of the *Odyssey*.

v. 168, &c. *Who call'd to council* —

*But call'd untimely, &c.*

It may seem at first view, that the poet affirms the night to be an improper season to convene a council. This is not his meaning: in the *Iliad*, there are several councils by night; nay, ἐν νυκτὶ βάλῃ is used proverbially to express the best concerted councils. What therefore Nestor here condemns is the calling not a select, but a public assembly of the soldiers in the night, when they are in no danger of an enemy, and when they are apt to fly into insolence through wine, and the joy of victory. The night is then undoubtedly an ill chosen season: because the licence of the soldier cannot be so well restrained by night as by day. Eustathius.



Nor herald sworn the session to proclaim)  
 Sour with debauch, a reeling tribe they came.  
 To these the cause of meeting they explain,  
 And Menelaus moves to cross the main;  
 Not so the king of men : he will'd to stay; 175  
 The sacred rites and hecatombs to pay,  
 And calm Minerva's wrath. Oh blind to fate!  
 The gods not lightly change their love, or hate.  
 With ire-full taunts each other they oppose,  
 'Till in loud tumult all the Greeks arose. 180  
 Now diff'rent counsels ev'ry breast divide,  
 Each burns with rancour to the adverse side :  
 Th' unquiet night strange projects entertain'd;  
 (So Jove, that urg'd us to our fate, ordain'd.)  
 We, with the rising morn our ships unmoor'd, 185  
 And brought our captives and our stores aboard;  
 But half the people with respect obey'd  
 The king of men, and at his bidding stay'd.  
 Now on the wings of winds our course we keep,  
 (For God had smooth'd the waters of the deep) 190  
 For Tenedos we spread our eager oars,  
 There land, and pay due victims to the pow'rs :  
 To bless our safe return we join in pray'r,  
 But angry Jove dispers'd our vows in air,  
 And rais'd new discord. Then (so heav'n decreed) 195  
 Ulysses first and Nestor disagreed :  
 Wise as he was, by various counsels sway'd,  
 He there, tho' late, to please the monarch, stay'd.

v. 177. *Oh blind to fate!*] It may be asked why Nestor condemns so solemnly this hero, calling him Νόστιος, when he describes him in so pious an action? This is not because the gods are implacable, for as Homer himself writes, Στρεπτοὶ δὲ καὶ θεοὶ αὐτοῖς; but because he vainly imagined that they would so soon be appeased, without any justice done upon the offender; Θεὸν ῥαδιῶς παλίντροπον are the words of Eustathius.

v. 197. *Wise as he was, by various counsels sway'd,  
 He there, tho' late, to please the monarch, stay'd.*  
 It is with great address that Nestor relates the return of Ulysses to  
 E. 4.



But I, determin'd, stem the foamy floods,  
 Warn'd of the coming fury of the gods. 200  
 With us, Tydides fear'd, and urg'd his haste:  
 And Menelaus came, but came the last.  
 He join'd our vessels in the Lesbian bay,  
 While yet we doubted of our wat'ry way;  
 If to the right to urge the pilot's toil, 205  
 (The safer road) beside the Pfyrian isle;  
 Or the straight course to rocky Chios plow,  
 And anchor under Mimas' shaggy brow?  
 We sought direction of the pow'r divine:  
 The god propitious gave the guiding sign; 210  
 Thro' the mid seas he bids our navy steer,  
 And in Eubœa shun the woes we fear.  
 The whistling winds already wak'd the sky;  
 Before the whistling winds the vessels fly,  
 With rapid swiftness cut the liquid way, 215  
 And reach Gereftus at the point of day.  
 There hecatombs of bulls, to Neptune slain,  
 High-flaming please the monarch of the main.  
 The fourth day shone, when all their labours o'er  
 Tydides' vessels touch'd the wish'd-for shore: 220  
 But I to Pylos scud before the gales,  
 The god still breathing on my swelling sails;

Agamemnon; he ascribes it not directly to Ulysses, but to his associates in the voyage; he mollifies it, in complaisance to Telemachus. But Nestor, according to Dacier, conceals the true reason of his return; it was not to please Agamemnon, but out of fear of the goddess Minerva, whose statue he had taken by force from Troy: to appease that goddess, he returns to join in sacrifice with Agamemnon. Eustathius.

v. 200. *Warn'd of the coming fury of the gods.*] It may be asked how Nestor attained this knowledge of the evils which the gods were preparing? Eustathius ascribes it to his great wisdom, which gave him an insight into futurity. Dacier with more reason tells us, that Nestor knew that Minerva had been offended, and might consequently apprehend a punishment was to be inflicted for the offence.

v. 221. *But I to Pylos, &c.*] Eustathius observes from the ancients, that the poet with great judgment suspends, and breaks off



Sep'rate from all, I safely landed here;  
 Their fates or fortunes never reach'd my ear.  
 Yet what I learn'd, attend; as here I sat, 225  
 And ask'd each voyager each hero's fate;  
 Curious to know, and willing to relate.

Safe reach'd the Myrmidons their native land,  
 Beneath Achilles' warlike son's command.  
 Those, whom the heir of great Apollo's art, 230  
 Brave Philoctetes, taught to wing the dart;  
 And those whom Idomen from Ilion's plain  
 Had led, securely cross'd the dreadful main.  
 How Agamemnon touch'd his Argive coast,  
 And how his life by fraud and force he lost, 235  
 And how the murd'rer paid his forfeit breath;  
 What lands so distant from that scene of death  
 But trembling heard the fame? and heard, admire  
 How well the son appeas'd his slaughter'd fire!  
 Ev'n to th' unhappy, that unjustly bleed, 240  
 Heav'n gives posterity, t' avenge the deed.

this relation of Nestor; by this method he has an opportunity to carry Telemachus to other countries, and insert into his poem the story of Menelaus and Helen: this method likewise gives an air of probability to what he writes; the poet seems afraid to deceive, and when he sends Telemachus to other parts for better intelligence, he seems to consult truth and exactness.

v. 229. *Achilles' warlike son.*] The son of Achilles was named Neoptolemus, by others Pyrrhus; his story is this: when he had reached Thessaly with the Myrmidons of Achilles, by the advice of Thetis he set fire to his vessels; and being warned by Helenus, from the oracles, to fix his habitation where he found a house whose foundations were iron, whose walls were wood, and whose roof was wool; he took his journey on foot, and coming to a certain lake of Epirus, he found some persons fixing their spears with the point downwards into the earth, and covering the tops of them with their cloaks, and after this manner making their tents: he looked upon the oracle as fulfilled, and dwelt there. Afterwards having a son by Andromache the wife of Hector, he named him Molossus, from whom the region took the name of Molossia. From this country are the Molossi canes, mentioned by Virgil, Eustathius.



So fell Ægyſthus ; and may'ſt thou, my friend,  
 (On whom the virtues of thy fire deſcend)  
 Make future times thy equal act adore,  
 And be what brave Oreſtes was before ! 245

The prudent youth reply'd. O thou the grace  
 And laſting glory of the Grecian race !  
 Juſt was the vengeance, and to lateſt days  
 Shall long poſterity reſound the praiſe.  
 Some god this arm with equal prowels bleſs ! 250  
 And the proud ſuitors ſhall its force confeſs :  
 Injurious men ! who while my ſoul is fore  
 Of freſh affronts, are meditating more.  
 But heav'n denies this honour to my hand,  
 Nor ſhall my father repoſſeſs the land : 255  
 The father's fortune never to return,  
 And the ſad ſon's to ſuffer and to mourn !

Thus he ; and Neſtor took the word : My ſon,  
 Is it then true, as diſtant rumours run,  
 That crowds of rivals for thy mother's charms 260  
 Thy palace fill with insults and alarms ?  
 Say, is the fault, thro' tame ſubmiſſion, thine ?  
 Or leagu'd againſt thee, do thy people join,  
 Mov'd by ſome oracle, or voice divine ? }

v. 242. *So fell Ægyſthus ; and may'ſt thou, my friend, &c.*] Neſtor introduces the mention of Ægyſthus very artfully ; it is to raiſe an emulation in Telemachus to revenge Ulyſſes, as Oreſtes had Agamemnon ; it has the intended effect, and we find that Telemachus dwells upon his ſtory with a virtuous envy ; yet at the ſame time with great modeſty ; Euſtathius gives a different reading in

— — — ἑσσομένοιςιν πύθεσθαι, or  
 ἑσσομένονσιν αἰδῆν.

both the expreſſions are uſed in Homer, the preference is therefore ſubmitted to the reader.

v. 264. *Mov'd by ſome oracle, or voice divine ?*] The words in the original are, “ following the voice of ſome god,” that is, ſome oracle ; Homer does not confine the expreſſion either to a good or bad ſenſe, but the context plainly ſhews, that they muſt be underſtood in a bad ſenſe ; namely to imply, that the people had re-  
 courſe to pretended oracles to juſtify their rebellion. This is evi-



And yet who knows, but ripening lies in fate 265  
 An hour of vengeance for th' afflicted state;  
 When great Ulysses shall suppress these harms,  
 Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms.  
 But if Athena, war's triumphant maid,  
 The happy son, will, as the father, aid, 270  
 (Whose fame and safety was her constant care:  
 In ev'ry danger and in ev'ry war :-

dent from what follows, where Nestor encourages Telemachus to expect that Ulysses may punish them for their crimes, ἀποτίσσειν ἔαθ' οὖν — if there had been no crime, there ought to be no punishment.

v. 268. *Ulysses singly, or all Greece in arms.*] The poet shews his great judgment in preparing the reader for the destruction of the suitors; that great catastrophe is managed by few hands, and it might seem incredible that so few could destroy so many: the poet therefore, to give an air of truth to his action, frequently inculcates the assistance of Pallas, which must at least shew, that such a great exploit is not impossible to be executed by stratagems and valour: it is by art, not strength, that Ulysses conquers.

*All Greece in arms.*

This is spoken in a general sense, and comprehends not only the subjects of Ulysses, or even the Pylians and Spartans, but implies, that all the Greeks would rise in the cause of Ulysses. What the suitors had spoken scoffingly in the preceding book, that Telemachus was sailing to Pyle or Sparta for supplies, appears in this not to be impracticable; so that it was choice and not necessity that determined the poet to make use of no such easy expedients for the destruction of the suitors. Eustathius.

It may be added, that the very nature of epic poetry, and of the Odyssey in particular, requires such a conduct: in the Iliad, Achilles is the chief agent, and performs almost all the great actions; Æneas is painted after the same manner by Virgil; the one kills Hector, the other Turnus, both which are the decisive actions: it was equally necessary to exalt the character of Ulysses, by bringing him into difficulties from which he is personally to extricate himself: this the poet sufficiently brings about by refusing all the easy methods for his re-establishment, because the more difficult ways are most conducive to the honour of his hero: thus as Achilles and Æneas kill Hector and Turnus with their own hands, so the suitors fall chiefly by the hand of Ulysses. It is necessary for the hero of the poem to execute the decisive action, for by this method the poet compleats his character, his own greatness surmounts all difficulties, and he goes off the stage with the utmost advantage, by leaving a noble character upon the mind of the spectators.



Never on man did heav'nly favour shine  
 With rays so strong, distinguish'd and divine,  
 As those with which Minerva mark'd thy fire) 275  
 So might she love thee, so thy soul inspire!  
 Soon shou'd their hopes in humble dust be laid,  
 And long oblivion of the bridal bed.

Ah! no such hope (the prince with sighs replies)  
 Can touch my breast; that blessing heav'n denies. 280  
 Ev'n by celestial favour were it giv'n,  
 Fortune or fate wou'd cross the will of heav'n.

What words are these, and what imprudence thine?  
 (Thus interpos'd the martial maid divine)  
 Forgetful youth! but know, the pow'r above 285  
 With ease can save each object of his love;  
 Wide as his will, extends his boundless grace;  
 Nor lost in time, nor circumscrib'd by place.  
 Happier his lot, who many sorrows past,  
 Long lab'ring gains his natal shore at last; 290

v. 282. *Fortune or fate wou'd cross the will of heav'n.*] It may be asked how an expression so near blasphemy, as Eustathius observes, could escape a person of such piety as Telemachus? It is true, the poet makes Minerva herself correct it; but yet the objection remains, viz. how could Telemachus speak it? I think since the poet himself condemns it, we may give it up as an indecency in Telemachus; it is natural for men in despair (and that was the condition of Telemachus) to use a vehemence of expression, and this might transport Telemachus beyond the bounds of prudence. The only possible way that occurs to me to take off the impiety, is to have recourse to destiny: it was the opinion of the antients, that the gods could not alter destiny: and then Telemachus may mean no more, than that it was decreed by the destinies that Ulysses should return no more, so the gods themselves could not restore him.

Thus in the xvth of the *Metamorphosis*, Venus in vain applies to the gods to preserve Julius Cæsar.

— — “ Superosque movet, qui rumpere quanquam  
 “ Ferrea non possunt veterum decreta sororum,” &c.

And a little lower Jupiter says to Venus,

— — — “ Sola insuperabile fatum,  
 “ Nata, movere paras?”

v. 289. *Happier his lot, who, &c.*] Nothing can be better imagined to encourage Telemachus, than what the poet here delivers:



Than who too speedy, hastes to end his life

By some stern ruffian, or adult'rous wife.

Death only is the lot which none can miss,

And all is possible to heav'n, but this.

The best, the dearest fav'rite of the sky

295

Must taste that cup, for man is born to die.

Thus check'd, reply'd Ulysses' prudent heir :

Mentor, no more — the mournful thought forbear ;

For he no more must draw his country's breath,

Already snatch'd by fate, and the black doom of death !

Pass we to other subjects ; and engage

301

On themes remote the venerable sage :

Minerva sets Agamemnon in opposition to Ulysses : Agamemnon made a speedy voyage to his country, and there fell by treachery ; Ulysses has long been absent, but yet is happier than Agamemnon : the gods perhaps reserve him for better fortunes, at least nothing can be concluded from his long absence, and this is sufficient to teach Telemachus not to despair. Eustathius.

v. 294. *And all is possible to heav'n, but this.*] What Minerva here says justifies the remark I made, that what Telemachus seemed to have spoken rashly, may be softened, if not vindicated, by having recourse to destiny : it is evident from this passage, that destiny was superiour to the power of the gods : otherwise Minerva speaks as blasphemously as Telemachus : for what difference is there between saying, that the gods cannot preserve even those they love from death, and saying that the gods could not save Ulysses ? Why therefore may not the words of Telemachus be thought to have a respect to destiny ?

I am of opinion, that the poet had something further in view by putting these words into the mouth of *Minerva* : the words of *Telemachus*, if taken grossly, might appear shocking to so pious a person as *Nestor*, and make an ill impression upon him to the disadvantage of *Telemachus* ; *Minerva* therefore artfully explains it, and softens the horror of it by reconciling it to the theology of those ages.

v. 301. *Pass we to other subjects ; —*] *Telemachus* here puts several questions, as it were in a breath, to *Nestor* ; and *Plutarch* observes upon this passage, that he who enquires any thing of an old man, though the old man himself has no concern in the story, wins his heart at once ; and incites a person, who is upon all occasions very willing to discourse. He introduces this as an instance of the art *Telemachus* uses, in adapting himself by his questions to the temper of the person with whom he converses : he puts together, continues he, several questions upon several subjects, which



(Who thrice has seen the perishable kind  
Of men decay, and thro' three ages shin'd,  
Like gods majestic, and like gods in mind.) 305 }

For much he knows, and just conclusions draws  
From various precedents, and various laws.

O son of Neleus ! awful Nestor, tell

How he, the mighty Agamemnon fell ?

By what strange fraud Ægythus wrought, relate, 310

(By force he could not) such a hero's fate ?

Liv'd Menelaus not in Greece ! or where

Was then the martial brother's pious care ?

Condemn'd perhaps some foreign shore to tread ;

Or sure Ægythus had not dar'd the deed. 315

To whom the full of days. Illustrious youth,

Attend (tho' partly thou hast guest) the truth.

For had the martial Menelaus found

The ruffian breathing yet on Argive ground ;

Nor earth had hid his carcase from the skies, 320

Nor Grecian virgins shriek'd his obsequies,

is more judicious than to confine his answer to a single interrogatory, and by that method deprive Nestor of one of the most pleasant enjoyments of old age, I mean the pleasure of talking. Plutarch. Sympotic.

v. 303. *Who thrice had seen the perishable kind  
Of men decay, —]*

The poet here tells us that Nestor was now in his fourth generation : Ovid took the word γένεα to signify an hundred years ; but then Nestor must have been above three hundred years old. Others with more probability understand it to signify a generation, or such a portion of time in which any race of men flourish together, which is computed to be about thirty years. I refer the reader to the note of the 333d verse of the first book of the Iliad, for the particular age of Nestor. According to that computation, he must now be about ninety-five years of age.

v. 309. *How he, the mighty Agamemnon fell ?]* Telemachus does not ask this question out of curiosity, but with great judgment ; he knows there were designs against his life, as well as there had been against Agamemnon ; he therefore asks it, that he may learn how to defeat them ; chiefly to instruct himself how best to assist his father upon his return, by aiding him in escaping the snares of the suitors. Dacier.



But fowls obscene dismember'd his remains,  
 And dogs had torn him on the naked plains.  
 While us the works of bloody Mars employ'd,  
 The wanton youth inglorious peace enjoy'd ; 325  
 He, stretch'd at ease in Argos' calm recess,  
 (Whose stately steeds luxuriant pastures bless)  
 With flattery's insinuating art  
 Sooth'd the frail queen, and poison'd all her heart.  
 At first with worthy shame and decent pride, 330  
 The royal dame his lawless suit deny'd.  
 For virtue's image yet possess'd her mind,  
 Taught by a master of the tuneful kind :  
 Atrides, parting for the Trojan war,  
 Consign'd the youthful consort to his care. 335  
 True to his charge, the bard preserv'd her long  
 In honour's limits ; such the pow'r of song.  
 But when the gods these objects of their hate  
 Dragg'd to destruction, by the links of fate ;

v. 333. *Taught by a master of the tuneful kind.*] Homer through the whole *Odyssey* speaks much in honour of the art which he himself loved, and in which he so eminently excelled : from these and other passages we may learn the state of poetry in those ages : “ Poets (says Eustathius) were ranked in the class of philosophers ; “ and the ancients made use of them as preceptors in music and “ morality :” Strabo quotes this very passage as an instance of the excellence of poetry in forming the soul to worthy actions : Ægyptus could not debauch Clytemnestra, until he banished the poet who was her guide and instructor.

Various are the conjectures of the antients about the name of the bard here celebrated : some, says Eustathius, tell us, it was Chariades, some Demodocus, some Glaucus, &c. but I pass them over, because they are conjectures.

There were many degrees of these ἀοιδοί ; some were ἀοιδοὶ ῥηγῶν, others ἀοιδοὶ περὶ γάμους : but such bards as are here mentioned were of an higher station, and retained as instructors by kings and princes.

I cannot omit one remark of Eustathius : he tells us, that some persons write that these ἀοιδοὶ had their names from hence, ὡς ἀοιδοῖα μὴ ἔχοντες ; exactly resembling the modern Italian singers : Madam Dacier is not to be forgiven for passing over a remark of such importance ; if this be true, it makes a great difference between the antient and modern poets, and is the only advantage I know we have over them,



The bard they banish'd from his native soil, 340  
And left all helpless in a desert isle :

There he, the sweetest of the sacred train,  
Sung dying to the rocks, but sung in vain.

Then virtue was no more ; her guard away,  
She fell, to lust a voluntary prey. 345

Ev'n to the temple stalk'd th' adult'rous spouse,  
With impious thanks, and mockery of vows,  
With images, with garments, and with gold ;  
And od'rous fumes from loaded altars roll'd.

Meantime from flaming Troy we cut the way, 350  
With Menelaus, thro' the curling sea.

But when to Sunium's sacred point we came,  
Crown'd with the temple of th' Athenian dame ;

Atrides' pilot, Phrontes, there expir'd ;  
(Phrontes, of all the sons of men admir'd 355

To steer the bounding bark with steady toil,  
When the storm thickens, and the billows boil)

While yet he exercis'd the steerman's art,  
Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart ;

v. 344. *Then virtue was no more ; her guard away,  
She fell, ——— &c.]*

There is a fine moral couched in the story of the bard and Clytemnestra ; it admirably paints the advantage we draw from wise companions for the improvement of our virtues : Clytemnestra was chaste, because her instructor was wise : his wisdom was an insuperable guard to her modesty. It was long before she yielded ; virtue and honour had a long contest ; but she no sooner yielded to adultery, but she assisted in the murder of her husband ; from whence we may draw another moral, that one vice betrays us into another : and when once the fences of honour are thrown down, we become a prey to every passion. Dacier.

v. 346. *Ev'n to the temple stalk'd th' adult'rous spouse.]* Here is a surprising mixture of religion and impiety : Ægisthus, upon the accomplishment of so great a crime as adultery, returns thanks to the gods by oblations, as if they had assisted him in the execution of it. Nestor dwells upon it at large, to shew that Ægisthus greatly aggravated his guilt by such a piece of impious devotion. Dacier.

v. 359. *Apollo touch'd him with his gentle dart.]* Homer calls the darts of Apollo ἀγáva, or gentle ; to signify that those who die thus suddenly, die without pain. Eustathius.



Ev'n with the rudder in his hand, he fell. 360  
 To pay whose honours to the shades of hell,  
 We check'd our haste, by pious office bound,  
 And laid our old companion in the ground.  
 And now the rites discharg'd, our course we keep  
 Far on the gloomy bosom of the deep : 365  
 Soon as Malæa's misty tops arise,  
 Sudden the Thund'rer blackens all the skies,  
 And the winds whistle, and the surges roll  
 Mountains on mountains, and obscure the pole.  
 The tempest scatters, and divides our fleet ; 370  
 Part, the storm urges on the coast of Crete,  
 Where winding round the rich Cydonian plain,  
 The streams of Jardan issue to the main.  
 There stands a rock, high eminent and steep,  
 Whose shaggy brow o'erhangs the shady deep, 375  
 And views Gortyna on the western side ;  
 On this rough Aufer drove th' impetuous tide :  
 With broken force the billows roll'd away,  
 And heav'd the fleet into the neighb'ring bay,

Dacier complains that some critics think Homer worthy of blame for enlarging upon so mean a person as a pilot. It is a sufficient answer to observe, that arts were in high esteem in those times, and men that were eminent in them were in great honour. Neither were arts then confined as in these ages to mean personages : no less a person than Ulysses builds a vessel in the sequel of the *Odyssey* ; so that this is a false piece of delicacy. If Homer be culpable, so is Virgil ; he gives the genealogy of Palinurus, as well as Homer of Phrontes. Virgil's description is censured as too long, Homer concludes his in seven lines ; and lastly, Virgil's episode has been judged by the critics to be an unnecessary ornament, and to contribute nothing to the poem ; Homer relates the death of Phrontes, to introduce the dispersion of the fleet of Menelaus ; the fleet might well be scattered, when it wanted so excellent a pilot.

v. 371. *Part, the storm urges on the coast of Crete.* ] Homer does not amuse us by relating what became of these companions of Menelaus ; he omits this judiciously, and follows the thread of his story : Menelaus is the person whom the poet has in view ; he therefore passes over the story of his companions, to carry on the fable of the poem by leading us directly to Menelaus.



Thus sav'd from death, they gain'd the Phæstan shores,  
 With shatter'd vessels, and disabled oars : 381  
 But five tall barks the winds and waters tost,  
 Far from their fellows, on th' Ægyptian coast.  
 There wander'd Menelaus thro' foreign shores,  
 Amassing gold, and gath'ring naval stores ; 385  
 While curst Ægythus the detested deed  
 By fraud fulfill'd, and his great brother bled.  
 Sev'n years, the traitor rich Mycenæ sway'd,  
 And his stern rule the groaning land obey'd ;  
 The eighth, from Athens to his realm restor'd, 390  
 Orestes brandish'd the revenging sword,  
 Slew the dire pair, and gave to fun'ral flame  
 The vile assassin, and adult'rous dame.  
 That day, ere yet the bloody triumphs cease,  
 Return'd Atrides to the coast of Greece, 395  
 And safe to Argos' port his navy brought,  
 With gifts of price and pond'rous treasure fraught.

v. 383. ——— *On the Ægyptian coast.*] In the original it is,  
 “ The wind and water carried them to Ægyptus.” Homer by  
 Ægyptus means the river Nile, and then it is always used in the  
 masculine gender ; the region about it took its name from the ri-  
 ver Ægyptus, this is always used in the feminine gender ; but the  
 country had not received that name in the days of Homer. Eu-  
 stathius.

What Dacier adds to this observation, may assist in determining  
 the dispute concerning the priority of Homer and Hesiod : Hesiod  
 makes mentions of the river Nilus ; if therefore it be true that  
 Ægyptus had not been called by the name of Nilus in the times of  
 Homer, it is a demonstration that Hesiod was posterior to Homer ;  
 otherwise he could not have been acquainted with any other name  
 but that of Ægyptus.

v. 390. *From Athens to his realm* ———] There is a different  
 reading in this place ; instead of ἀπ' Ἀθηνάων, some write ἀπὸ Φω-  
 κίων ; for Orestes was educated by Strophius king of Phocis, and  
 father of Pylades : the ancients reconcile the difference, by saying  
 that Orestes might be sent from Phocis to Athens for his education,  
 and returning thence to his own country, might revenge the death  
 of his father Agamemnon ; so that although he was first bred up  
 in Phocis, he was afterwards a sojourner in Athens. Eustathius.



Hence warn'd, my son beware ! nor idly stand  
 Too long a stranger to thy native land ;  
 Left heedless absence wear thy wealth away, 400  
 While lawless feasters in thy palace sway ;  
 Perhaps may seize thy realm, and share the spoil ;  
 And thou return, with disappointed toil,  
 From thy vain journey, to a rifled isle. }  
 Howe'er, my friend, indulge one labour more, 405  
 And seek Atrides on the Spartan shore.  
 He, wand'ring long, a wider circle made,  
 And many-languag'd nations has survey'd ;  
 And measur'd tracts unknown to other ships,  
 Amid the monstrous wonders of the deeps ; 410  
 (A length of ocean and unbounded sky,  
 Which scarce the sea-fowl in a year o'erfly)  
 Go then ; to Sparta take the wat'ry way,  
 Thy ship and sailors but for orders stay ;  
 Or if by land thou chuse thy course to bend, 415  
 My steeds, my chariots, and my sons attend :

v. 411. *A length of ocean and unbounded sky,  
 Which scarce the sea-fowl in a year o'erfly.*]

It must be confest, that Nestor greatly exaggerates this description : Homer himself tells us, that a ship may sail in five days from Crete to Ægypt ; wherefore then this hyperbole of Nestor ? It might perhaps be to deter Telemachus from a design of sailing to Crete, and he through his inexperience might believe the description. It may be added, that what Nestor speaks concerning the flight of birds, may be only said to shew the great distance of that sea : nay, by a favourable interpretation it may be reconciled to truth ; the meaning then must be this : should a person observe that sea a whole year, he would not see one bird flying over it, both because of the vastness and dreadfulness of it ; and perhaps the whole of this might arise from the observation, that this sea is not frequented by birds. This is wholly and almost literally taken from Eustathius ; and if we add to this the ignorance of the sea and sea-affairs in those ages, we shall the less wonder to hear so wise a man as Nestor describing it with so much terrour. Navigation is now greatly improved, and the moderns sail further in a month, than the ancients could in a year ; their whole art consisting chiefly in coasting along the shores, and consequently they made but little way.



Thee to Atrides they shall safe convey,  
 Guides of thy road, companions of thy way.  
 Urge him with truth to frame his free replies,  
 And sure he will : for Menelaus is wise. 420

Thus while he speaks, the ruddy sun descends,  
 And twilight grey her ev'ning shade extends.  
 Then thus the blue-ey'd maid : O full of days !  
 Wise are thy words, and just are all thy ways.  
 Now immolate the tongues, and mix the wine, 425  
 Sacred to Neptune and the powers divine.  
 The lamp of day is quench'd beneath the deep,  
 And soft approach the balmy hours of sleep :  
 Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast,  
 Timeless, indecent, but retire to rest. 430

v. 425. *Now immolate the tongues* —] Various are the reasons which Eustathius reports concerning this oblation of the tongues at the conclusion of the sacrifice. It was to purge themselves from any evil words they might have uttered ; or because the tongue was reckoned the best part of the sacrifice, and so reserved for the completion of it ; or they offered the tongue to the gods, as witnesses to what they had spoken. I omit the rest as superfluous. They had a custom of offering the tongues to Mercury, because they believed him the giver of eloquence. Dacier expatiates upon this custom. The people, says she, might fear, lest through wine and the joy of the festival, they might have uttered some words unbecoming the sanctity of the occasion : by this sacrifice of the tongues, they signified that they purged away whatever they had spoken amiss during the festival ; and asked in particular pardon of Mercury, who presided over discourse, to the end they might not carry home any uncleanness which might stop the blessings expected from the sacrifice.

v. 429. *Nor fits it to prolong the heav'nly feast,  
 Timeless, indecent, &c.]*

Eustathius shews the difference between *éopλαί*, festivals, and *θύσιαί*, or sacrifices : in the former it was customary to spend the whole night in wine and rejoicing : in the latter, this was reckoned an unlawful custom, through the fear of falling into any indecencies through wine. He likewise gives another reason of this injunction, by telling us that it was the custom to offer sacrifices to the celestial powers in the day, and even to finish them about the setting of the sun ; and that those who dealt in incantations performed their sacrifices to the infernal powers by night, and finished them before



So spake Jove's daughter, the celestial maid.  
 The sober train attended and obey'd.  
 The sacred heralds on their hands around  
 Pour'd the full urns ; the youths the goblets crown'd ;  
 From bowl to bowl the holy bev'rage flows ; 435  
 While to the final sacrifice they rose.  
 The tongues they cast upon the fragrant flame,  
 And pour, above, the consecrated stream.  
 And now, their thirst by copious draughts allay'd,  
 The youthful hero and th' Athenian maid 440  
 Propose departure from the finish'd rite,  
 And in their hollow bark to pass the night :  
 But this the hospitable sage deny'd.  
 Forbid it, Jove ! and all the gods ! he cry'd,  
 Thus from my walls the much-lov'd son to send 445  
 Of such a hero, and of such a friend !  
 Me, as some needy peasant, would ye leave,  
 Whom heav'n denies the blessing to relieve ?  
 Me would you leave, who boast imperial sway,  
 When beds of royal state invite your stay ? 450

sun-rising. Either of these reasons sufficiently explains the words of the goddess ; and the former carries in it an excellent moral, that particular care should be taken in our acts of devotion, not to turn religion into impiety.

v. 450. *When beds of royal state invite your stay ?*] This passage gives us a full insight into the manners of these hospitable ages ; they not only kept a treasury for bowls or vases of gold or silver, to give as *ξενία*, or gifts of hospitality, but also a wardrobe of various habits and rich furniture, to lodge and bestow upon strangers. Eustathius relates, that Tellias of Agrigentum was a person of so great hospitality, that five hundred horsemen coming to his house in the winter season, he entertained them, and gave every man a cloak and a tunic. This laudable custom prevailed, and still prevails, in the eastern countries : it was the practice of Abraham of old, and is at this day of the Turks, as we may learn from their *caravanferas*, erected for the reception of travellers. And yet Dacier observes, that a French critic has shewed so ill a taste as to ridicule this passage. “ Telemachus (says that author) being entertained by Nestor, intimates his intention of returning to lodge “ on ship-board with his companions : but Nestor detains him, by “ asking him if he thought he had not quilts or coverlets to give



No—long as life this mortal shall inspire,  
 Or as my children imitate their fire,  
 Here shall the wand'ring stranger find his home,  
 And hospitable rites adorn the dome.

Well hast thou spoke (the blue-ey'd maid replies) 455  
 Belov'd old man ! benevolent, as wise.  
 Be the kind dictates of thy heart obey'd,  
 And let thy words Telemachus persuade :  
 He to thy palace shall thy steps pursue ?  
 I to the ship, to give the orders due, 460 }  
 Prescribe directions, and confirm the crew.  
 For I alone sustain their naval cares,  
 Who boast experience from these silver hairs ;  
 All youths the rest, whom to this journey move  
 Like years, like tempers, and their prince's love. 465  
 There in the vessel shall I pass the night ;  
 And soon as morning paints the fields of light,  
 I go to challenge from the Caucons bold,  
 A debt, contracted in the days of old.

“ him a night's lodging : upon this Telemachus goes to bed in a  
 “ resounding gallery, and Nestor in a bed which his wife made  
 “ ready for him.” The noblest things are most liable to burlesque, by perverting their meaning ; as some pictures, by varying the position, represent a man or a monster. He is very severe upon the resounding gallery, which in truth means no more than very lofty or elevated, and by consequence very noble and magnificent.

v. 468. *I go to challenge from the Caucons.*] The poet makes a double use of these words of the goddess ; she gives an air of probability to her excuse, why she should not be pressed to stay ; and at the same time Homer avoids the absurdity of introducing that goddess at Sparta ; Menelaus and Helen are celebrating the nuptials of their son and daughter : Minerva is a virgin deity, and consequently an enemy to all nuptial ceremonies. Eustathius.

But it may be necessary to observe who these Caucons are : we find in the tenth book of the Iliad, the Caucons mentioned as auxiliaries to Troy : there Dolon says,

The Carians, Caucons, the Pelasgian host,  
 And Leleges encamp along the coast.

Are these Caucons the same with those here mentioned ? Eustathius informs us, that there was a people of Triphyly, between Elis and



But this thy guest, receiv'd with friendly care, 470  
 Let thy strong courfers swift to Sparta bear;  
 Prepare thy chariot at the dawn of day,  
 And be thy son companion of his way.

Then turning with the word, Minerva flies,  
 And soars an eagle thro' the liquid skies. 475

Vision divine! the throng'd spectators gaze  
 In holy wonder fixt, and still amaze.

But chief the rev'rend sage admir'd; he took  
 The hand of young Telemachus, and spoke,

Oh happy youth! and favour'd of the skies, 480  
 Distinguish'd care of guardian deities!

Pylos, named Caucons: but Strabo says, that the whole race is now extinct, and that these here mentioned are of Dymæa, and take their name from the river Caucon: whereas those in the Iliad are Paphlagonians: they were a wandering nation, and consequently might be the same people originally, and retain the same name in different countries.

v. 478. *But chief the rev'rend sage admir'd* —] It may be asked why Nestor is in such a surprise at the discovery of the goddess: it is evident from the Iliad, that he had been no stranger to such intercourses of the deities; nay, in this very book Nestor tells us, that Ulysses enjoyed almost the constant presence of Minerva; in-somuch that Sophocles, the great imitator of Homer, relates, that he knew the goddess by her voice, without seeing her. Eustathius answers, that the wonder of Nestor arose not from the discovery of that deity, but that she should accompany so young a person as Telemachus: after her departure, the old man stood amazed, and looked upon that hero as some very extraordinary person, whom in such early years the goddess of war and wisdom had vouchsafed to attend. This interpretation agrees perfectly with what Nestor speaks to Telemachus.

v. 481. *Distinguish'd care of guardian deities!*] I will take this opportunity to obviate an objection that may be made against all interposition of the gods in assisting the heroes of the Odyssey: it has been thought by some critics a disparagement to them to stand in continual need of such supernatural succour: if two persons were engaged in combat, and a third person should immediately step in to the assistance of one of the parties, and kill the adversary, would it not reflect upon the valour of his friend who was so weak as to want such assistance? Why, for instance, should Jupiter help Æneas to kill Turnus? Was not he brave enough to fight, and strong enough to conquer his enemy by his own prowess? and would not Turnus have killed Æneas with the same assistance? It is there-



Whose early years for future worth engage,  
 No vulgar manhood, no ignoble age.  
 For lo! none other of the court above  
 Than she, the daughter of almighty Jove, 485  
 Pallas herself, the war-triumphant maid,  
 Confest is thine, as once thy father's aid.  
 So guide me, goddess! so propitious shine  
 On me, my consort, and my royal line!

fore a disparagement to the actors, thus continually to supply the defects of a hero by the power of a deity.

But this is a false way of arguing, and from hence it might be inferred, that the love and favour of a deity serves only to make those whom he assists, and those who depend upon such assistance, appear weak, impotent, cowardly, and unworthy to be conquerors. Can any doubt arise whether the love and favour of a god be a disparagement or honour to those whom he favours? According to these critics, we should find the character of a perfect hero in an impious Mezentius, who acknowledges no God but his own arm and his own sword: it is true, the objection would be just, if the hero himself performed nothing of the action; or if when he were almost conquered by the superiour valour of his enemy, he owed his life and victory to gods and miracles: but the hero always behaves himself in all his actions, as if he were to gain success without the assistance of the deity; and the presence of the gods is so ordered, that we may retrench every thing that is miraculous, without making any alteration in the action or character of the human personages. Thus in the instance of *Æneas* and *Turnus*, though *Jupiter* favours *Æneas*, yet *Æneas* is painted in stronger colours of fortitude, he appears superiour, as a man unassisted, and able to conquer *Turnus*; and consequently the favour of *Jupiter* makes no alteration in the action or character of *Æneas*.

There is likewise a wide difference between the assistance of a man and of a god: the actions of men belong only to the performers of those actions: but when a deity assists us by inspiring us with strength and courage, the actions we perform are really our own, and the more he favours us, the more glory he gives us: so that the assistance of man eclipses, but the assistance of a god exalts, our glory. Thus, for instance, when *Achilles* is pursuing *Hector*, he charges the Greeks to keep off from *Hector*, their assistance might lessen his glory: but when *Pallas* offers her assistance, he immediately embraces it as an honour, and boasts of it as such to *Hector*. I have been large upon this objection, because the reader ought to carry it in his memory through the whole poem, and apply it to every action, in which any share is ascribed to any deity. See *Bossu* more at large concerning this objection.



A yearling bullock to thy name shall smoke, 490  
 Untam'd, unconscious of the galling yoke,  
 With ample forehead, and yet tender horns,  
 Whose budding honours ductile gold adorns.

Submissive thus the hoary sire preferr'd  
 His holy vow: the fav'ring goddess heard. 495  
 Then slowly rising, o'er the sandy space  
 Precedes the father, follow'd by his race,  
 (A long procession) timely marching home  
 In comely order to the regal dome.

There when arriv'd, on thrones around him plac'd,  
 His sons and grandsons the wide circle grac'd. 501

To these the hospitable sage, in sign  
 Of social welcome, mix'd the racy wine,  
 (Late from the mellowing cask restor'd to light,  
 By ten long years refin'd, and rosy bright.) 505

To Pallas high the foaming bowl he crown'd,  
 And sprinkled large libations on the ground.  
 Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,  
 And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs.

Deep in a rich alcove the prince was laid, 510

And slept beneath the pompous colonade;

Fast by his side Pisistratus lay spread,

(In age his equal) on a splendid bed:

But in an inner court, securely clos'd,

The rev'rend Nestor and his queen repos'd. 515

When now Aurora, daughter of the dawn,

With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn;

The old man early rose, walk'd forth, and sat

On polish'd stone before his palace gate:

v. 518. ———— *And sat on polish'd stone before his palace gate.*] We have here an ancient custom recorded by the poet; a king places himself before the gate of his palace upon a seat of marble, worn smooth by long use, says Eustathius, or perhaps smoothed exquisitely by the hand of the workman. What I would chiefly observe is, that they placed themselves thus in public for the dispatch of justice: we read in the scripture of judges "sitting



With unguents smooth the lucid marble shone, 520  
 Where ancient Neleus sat, a rustic throne;  
 But he descending to th' infernal shade,  
 Sage Nestor fill'd it, and the scepter sway'd.  
 His sons around him mild obeisance pay,  
 And duteous take the orders of the day. 525  
 First Echephron and Stratius quit their bed;  
 Then Perseus, Aretus, and Thrasymed;  
 The last Pisistratus arose from rest:  
 They came, and near him plac'd the stranger-guest.  
 To these the senior thus declar'd his will: 530  
 My sons! the dictates of your fire fulfil.  
 To Pallas, first of gods, prepare the feast,  
 Who grac'd our rites, a more than mortal guest.  
 Let one, dispatchful, bid some swain to lead  
 A well-fed bullock from the grassy mead; 535  
 One seek the harbour where the vessels moor,  
 And bring thy friends, Telemachus! ashore,  
 (Leave only two the galley to attend)  
 Another to Laerceus must we send,

"in the gate:" and that this procedure of Nestor was for that purpose, is probable from the expression, "He sat in the seat where Neleus [*μῆτορ*, or *Consiliarius*,] used to sit," (which seems to express his wisdom in the discharge of justice.) Nestor is also described as bearing his scepter in his hand, which was never used but upon some act of regality, in the dispatch of justice, or other solemn occasions. Perhaps, says Dacier, these seats or thrones might be consecrated with oil, to draw a reverence to the seats of justice as by an act of religion; but I rather judge (adds she) that no more is meant than to express the shining of these thrones, they being undoubtedly made of marble.

v. 528. *Pisistratus* ] Would I indulge my fancy in a conjecture, I might suppose that the famous tyrant Pisistratus was descended, or borrowed his name from this son of Nestor. Herodotus informs us, as Eustathius observes, that all the Pisistrati were originally Pylians. If this be true, we have a very strong evidence that Homer is not all fiction, but that he celebrates the great men of those ages with reality, and only embellishes the true story with the ornaments of poetry.



Artist divine, whose skilful hands infold  
 The victim's horn with circumfufile gold.  
 The reft may here the pious duty fhare,  
 And bid the handmaids for the feaft prepare,  
 The feats to range, the fragrant wood to bring,  
 And limpid waters from the living fpring. 545

He faid, and bufy each his care beftow'd;  
 Already at the gates the bullock low'd,  
 Already came the Ithacenfian crew,  
 The dext'rous fmith the tools already drew:  
 His pond'rous hammer, and his anvil found, 550  
 And his ftrong tongs to turn the metal round.  
 Nor was Minerva abfent from the rite,  
 She view'd her honours, and enjoy'd the fight.

v. 540. *Laerceus* ——— *artist divine, &c.*] The author of the parallel quotes this paffage to prove that Homer was ignorant of the mechanic arts: we have here, fays he, a gilder with his anvil and hammer; but what occafion has he for an anvil and hammer in the art of a gilder? Boileau has excellently vindicated Homer from this objection, in his reflections upon Longinus; this gilder was a gold-beater: Neftor, we fee, furnifhed the gold, and he beat it into leaves, fo that he had occafion to make ufe of his anvil and hammer; the anvil was portable, becaufe the work was not laborious. Our modern travellers affure us, that it is at this day the practice in the eastern regions, as in Perfia, &c. for the artists in metals to carry about with them the whole implements of trade, to the houfe of the perfons where they find employment; it is therefore a full vindication of Homer, to obferve that the gold this artist ufed in gilding, was nothing but gold beat into fine leaves.

v. 552. *Nor was Minerva abfent* ———] It may be asked in what fenfe Minerva can be faid to come to the facrifice? Eufthathius answers, that the ancients finding the inclinations of men to be bent incontinently upon pleafures, to oblige them to ufe them moderately, diftinguifhed times, ordained facrifices, and representing the gods in the forms of men, brought them to ufe thofe pleafures with difcretion; they taught them that the gods came down to their libations and facrifices, to induce them to govern their converfation with reverence and modefty: thus Jupiter and the other gods in the Iliad, and Neptune in the Odysſey, are faid to feaft with the Æthiopians.

If I might be pardoned a conjecture, I would fuppofe, that Minerva may in another fenfe be faid to come to the facrifice; I



With rev'rend hand the king presents the gold,  
 Which round th' intorted horns the gilder roll'd;  
 So wrought, as Pallas might with pride behold. 556  
 Young Aretus from forth his bridal bow'r  
 Brought the full laver, o'er their hands to pour,  
 And canisters of consecrated flour.  
 Stratius and Echephron the victim led; 560  
 The ax was held by warlike Thrasymed,  
 In act to strike: before him Perseus stood,  
 The vase extending to receive the blood.  
 The king himself initiates to the pow'r;  
 Scatters with quiv'ring hand the sacred flour, 565  
 And the stream sprinkles: from the curling brows  
 The hair collected in the fire he throws.  
 Soon as due vows on ev'ry part were paid,  
 And sacred wheat upon the victim laid,

mean by her image or statue: and what may seem to confirm this opinion, is what Diodorus relates in his third book concerning the abovementioned Æthiopians; they carried about the statues of Jupiter and the other gods twelve days, during which time the gods were said to be gone to the Æthiopians: and if the gods may be said to come to the Æthiopians by their statues, why may not the same be said of Minerva, from the introduction of her statue among the Pylians? So that the appearance of the goddess may possibly mean the appearance of her statue.

v. 560. *Stratius and Echephron, &c.*] Nestor here makes use only of the ministry of his sons; the reason of it is, because it was reckoned honourable to serve in the performance of sacrifice, this being in some sense an attending upon the gods: or because it was the practice of those ages for great persons to do those offices with their own hands, which in the latter have been performed by servants.

Eustathius reports a saying of Antigonus, who observing his son behaving himself imperiously to his subjects, "Know'st thou not," says he, that royalty itself is but illustrious servitude!" An intimation that he himself was but a servant of the public, and therefore should use his servants with moderation.

But the true reason of Nestor's assisting in the sacrifice is, because kings anciently had the inspection of religion, and priesthood was joined to royalty, according to that of Virgil,

"Rex Anius, rex idem hominum Phœbique sacerdos."



Strong Thrasymed discharg'd the speeding blow 570  
 Full on his neck, and cut the nerves in two.  
 Down sunk the heavy beast: the females round,  
 Maids, wives, and matrons, mix a shrilling sound,  
 Nor scorn'd the queen the holy choir to join,  
 (The first-born she, of old Clymenus' line; 575  
 In youth by Nestor lov'd, of spotless fame,  
 And lov'd in age, Eurydice her name.)  
 From earth they rear him, struggling now with death;  
 And Nestor's youngest stops the vents of breath.  
 The soul for ever flies: on all sides round 580  
 Streams the black blood, and smokes upon the ground.  
 The beast they then divide, and disunite  
 The ribs and limbs, observant of the rite:  
 On these, in double cawls involv'd with art,  
 The choicest morsels lay from ev'ry part. 585  
 The sacred sage before his altar stands,  
 Turns the burnt-off'ring with his holy hands,  
 And pours the wine, and bids the flames aspire:  
 The youth with instruments surround the fire.

v. 573. *Maids, wives, and matrons mix a shrilling sound.*] I have kept the meaning of the word in the original, which signifies prayers made with loud cries, ὀλόλυξαν. Ὀλολύγη, says Hesychius, is, φωνὴ γυναικῶν ἣν ποιῶνται ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς εὐχόμεναι, “the voice of women, which they make at sacrifices in their prayers.” But there is still something in it more to the present purpose; the scholiast upon Æschylus remarks that this word is not used properly but when applied to the prayers offered to Minerva, for Minerva is the only goddess to whom prayers are made with loud cries, she being the goddess of war; to other deities they offer prayer with thanksgiving; καὶ γὰρ μόνῃ τῇ Ἀθηνᾷ δαίμονι ἔση πολεμικῇ ὀλολύζεσσι, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοις θεοῖς παιωνίζεσσι.

Thus also in the sixth book of the Iliad, v. 301.

Αἶ δ' ὀλολυγῇ πᾶσαι Ἀθήνη χεῖρας ἄνεσχον.

They fill the dome with supplicating cries.

And in the present passage in the Odyssey,

αἶ δ' ὀλόλυξαν

Οὐλατέρες τε, νοοί τε, &c.

Dacier.



The thighs now sacrific'd, and entrails drest, 590  
Th' assistants part, transfix, and broil the rest.

While these officious tend the rites divine,  
The last fair branch of the Nestorcan line,  
Sweet Polycaſte, took the pleaſing toil  
To bathe the prince, and pour the fragrant oil. 595

O'er his fair limbs a flow'ry veſt he threw,  
And iſſu'd, like a god, to mortal view.  
His former ſeat beſide the king he found,  
(His people's father with his peers around)  
All plac'd at eaſe the holy banquet join, 600  
And in the dazzling goblet laughs the wine.

The rage of thirſt and hunger now ſuppreſt,  
The monarch turns him to his royal gueſt;  
And for the promis'd journey bids prepare  
The ſmooth-hair'd horſes, and the rapid car. 605  
Obſervant of his word; the word ſcarce ſpoke,  
The ſons obey, and join them to the yoke.  
Then bread and wine a ready handmaid brings,  
And preſents, ſuch as ſuit the ſtate of kings.

v. 594. *Sweet Polycaſte, took the pleaſing toil  
To bathe the prince, &c.]*

It is very neceſſary to ſay ſomething about this practice of women bathing and anointing men; it frequently occurs through the whole *Odyssey*, and is ſo contrary to the uſage of the moderns, as to give offence to modeſty; neither is this done by women of inferiour quality, but we have here a young princeſs, bathing, anointing, and cloathing the naked *Telemachus*. *Eustathius* indeed tells us, it was undoubtedly by her father's command: but if it was a piece of immodeſty, it does not ſolve the objection, whoever commanded it. I confeſs it would be immodeſt in theſe ages of the world, and the only excuſe that occurs to me is, to ſay that cuſtom eſtabliſhed it. It is in manners, in ſome degree, as in dreſs; if a faſhion never ſo indecent prevails, yet no perſon is ridiculous, becauſe it is faſhionable: ſo in manners, if a practice prevails univerſally, though not reconcileable to real modeſty, yet no perſon can be ſaid to be immodeſt who comes into it, becauſe it is agreeable to the cuſtom of the times and countries.



The glitt'ring feat Telemachus ascends; 610

His faithful guide Pisistratus attends;

With hasty hand the ruling reins he drew:

He lash'd the courfers, and the courfers flew.

Beneath the bounding yoke alike they held

Their equal pace, and smok'd along the field, 615

The tow'rs of Pylos sink, its views decay,

Fields after fields fly back, 'till close of day:

Then sunk the sun, and darken'd all the way. }

To Pheræ now, Diocleus' stately seat,

(Of Alpheus' race) the weary youths retreat. 620

v. 610, &c. *The conclusion of the book.*] I shall lay together what I have further to observe on the conclusion of this book: it is remarkable, that the poet does not amuse himself in describing the present Telemachus received from Nestor, or the provisions for the journey, or even the journey itself at large; he dispatches the whole in a few lines very judiciously; he carries his hero directly to Menelaus, who is to furnish many incidents that contribute to the design of the poem, and passes over other matters as unnecessary.

We have likewise a piece of poetical geography, and learn that it is exactly two days journey from Pyle to Lacedæmon.

This book takes up three days; the first is spent in the inquiries Telemachus makes of Nestor concerning Ulysses; the two last in the morning sacrifice at Pylos, and in the journey of Telemachus to Lacedæmon; so that five days have now passed since the opening of the poem. I have said nothing about the sacrifice, though it be the most exact description of the sacrifices, as practised by the ancients, perhaps extant in any author; I refer to the observations upon the first book of the Iliad.

I would here remark that the three first books are written with the utmost simplicity, there has been no room for such exalted strokes of poetry as are to be found in the Iliad, or in the future parts of the Odyssey: but this is not owing to the decay of genius in Homer, as some critics have affirmed (who look upon the Odyssey as bearing marks of his declining years) but to the nature of the subject. The characters of Achilles and Ulysses are both very great, but very different. The Iliad consists of battles and a continual commotion; the Odyssey in patience and wisdom: and consequently the style of the two poems must be as different as the characters of the two heroes. A noble fountain of poetry opens in the next book, and flows with an uninterrupted course almost through the whole Odyssey.



His house affords the hospitable rite,  
And pleas'd they sleep (the blessing of the night.)  
But when Aurora, daughter of the dawn,  
With rosy lustre purpled o'er the lawn;  
Again they mount, their journey to renew, 625  
And from the founding portico they flew:  
Along the waving fields their way they hold,  
The fields receding as the chariot roll'd:  
Then slowly sunk the ruddy globe of light,  
And o'er the shaded landscape rush'd the night. 630



T H E  
O D Y S S E Y.

\* B O O K IV.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The conference with Menelaus.

*Telemachus with Pisistratus arriving at Sparta, is hospitably received by Menelaus, to whom he relates the cause of his coming, and learns from him many particulars of what befel the Greeks since the destruction of Troy. He dwells more at large upon the prophecies of Proteus to him in his return, from which he acquaints Telemachus, that Ulysses is detained in the island of Calypso.*

*In the mean time the suitors consult to destroy Telemachus in his voyage home. Penelope is apprised of this, but comforted in a dream by Pallas, in the shape of her sister Iphima.*

**A**ND now proud Sparta with their wheels resounds,  
Sparta whose walls a range of hills surrounds :  
At the fair dome the rapid labour ends ;  
Where sat Atrides 'midst his bridal friends,  
With double vows invoking Hymen's pow'r, 5  
To bless his sons and daughters nuptial hour.

\* Aristotle in his Poetics reports, that certain ancient critics reproached Homer for an indecency in making Telemachus take his abode with Menelaus, and not with his own grandfather Icarius : this Monsieur Dacier sufficiently answers, by shewing that Icarius had settled himself in Acarnania, and not in Lacedæmon.

v. 5. ——— *invoking Hymen's pow'r.*] Athenæus has been very severe upon this passage, as Eustathius observes, and Dacier from Eustathius.

Aristarchus, says Athenæus, misguides us, the words τὸν δὲ εὐπὸν δαιμόνα led him into an error; whereas the marriage is com-



That day, to great Achilles' son resign'd,  
Hermione, the fairest of her kind,

pleated, the wedded couple gone away from Menelaus, and he and Helen at Lacedæmon. The five verses, continues he, (the fifteenth to the twentieth inclusively in the Greek) are taken from the eighteenth book of the Iliad, and inserted very improperly in this place by Aristarchus. Athenæus gives several reasons for his opinion, as that music and dancing were very contrary to the severe manners of the Lacedæmonians; besides the dance was a Cretan dance, how then could it be practised among the Spartans? The poet mentions neither the name of the bard, nor one word of the subject of the songs: neither can the words *μολπῆς ἐξάρχοντες* be applied at all to the dancers, but to the musicians; and lastly, it is not to be imagined that Telemachus and Pisistratus should be so unpolite, as not to be at all affected with the music, had there been any, and yet break out into such wonder at the sight of the beauty of the palace of Menelaus. Aristarchus, adds he, thought the description of the wedding of the son and daughter of a king was too meanly and concisely described, and therefore made this addition.

But it is easy to refute Athenæus, and vindicate Aristarchus. Athenæus understood *πέμπε* and *ἔγχε* in the wrong tense, they are of the imperfect, "he was sending," or "about to send," and not "had sent," &c. If the marriage had been absolutely finished, why should Minerva absent herself from Menelaus, when the celebration of the nuptials is the only reason of the absence of that goddess? And as for music and dancing being contrary to the severe manners of the Lacedæmonians, this is all conjecture: Menelaus lived more than three hundred years before Lycurgus; and because such diversions were forbid in Sparta in the days of Lycurgus, must it follow that they were not used in those of Menelaus? And should it be granted that music and dancing were not used in his times, might he not relax a little from the severity of his times, upon such an occasion of joy as the marriage of a son and daughter? I am sure these diversions are not more contrary to the severity of the Spartans, than the magnificence of the palace of Menelaus was to their simplicity. "But he does not name the bard, or "the subject of his songs." But is this a reason why the verses are spurious? We should rather admire the judgment of the poet, who having so fair an opportunity to describe these nuptials, yet rejects the temptation, dismisses the whole in a few lines, and follows where his subject leads him. The objection about the dance being Cretan is not more valid: Menelaus (as we may learn from the preceding book) had been in Crete, and might bring it thence to Lacedæmon. And as for the criticism upon *ἐξάρχοντες*, it is but a fallacy; Casaubon has shewn beyond contradiction, that *ἐξάρχειν* is applied indifferently to all those who give example to others; and consequently may be applied to dancers as well as musicians. It



Was sent to crown the long protracted joy,  
 Espous'd before the final doom of Troy : 10  
 With steeds and gilded cars, a gorgeous train  
 Attend the nymph to Phthia's distant reign.  
 Meanwhile at home, to Megapenthes' bed  
 The virgin-choir Alector's daughter led.  
 Brave Megapenthes, from a stol'n amour 15  
 To great Atrides' age his hand-maid bore :  
 To Helen's bed the gods alone assign  
 Hermione, t' extend the regal line ;  
 On whom a radiant pomp of graces wait,  
 Resembling Venus in attractive state. 20

While this gay friendly troop the king surround,  
 With festival and mirth the roofs resound :  
 A bard amid the joyous circle sings  
 High airs, attemper'd to the vocal strings ;  
 Whilst warbling to the varied strain, advance 25  
 Two sprightly youths to form the bounding dance.  
 'Twas then, that issuing thro' the palace gate  
 The splendid car roll'd slow in regal state :  
 On the bright eminence young Nestor shone,  
 And fast beside him great Ulysses' son : 30  
 Grave Eteoneus saw the pomp appear,  
 And speeding, thus address'd the royal ear.

Two youths approach, whose semblant features prove  
 Their blood devolving from the source of Jove.  
 Is due reception deign'd, or must they bend 35  
 Their doubtful course to seek a distant friend?

may be further added, that although it should be allowed that the word ἐξάρχειν is only properly applied to music, yet in this place the word would not be improperly applied to dancers ; for the dancers, without usurping upon the province of the singer, might μολπῆς ἐξάρχειν, or chuse those songs, to which they desired to dance, as is the usage at this day.

Diodorus is of opinion, that the whole twelve lines after the second to the fifteenth are not genuine ; but what has been said of Athenæus, may be applied to Diodorus.



Insensate ! (with a sigh the king replies)  
 Too long, mis-judging, have I thought thee wise :  
 But sure relentless folly steels thy breast,  
 Obdurate to reject the stranger-guest ;  
 To those dear hospitable rites a foe,  
 Which in my wand'rings oft' reliev'd my woe :  
 Fed by the bounty of another's board,  
 'Till pitying Jove my native realm restor'd —  
 Straight be the coursers from the car releas't,  
 Conduct the youths to grace the genial feast.

40

45

The seneschal rebuk'd in haste withdrew ;  
 With equal haste a menial train pursue :  
 Part led the coursers, from the car enlarg'd,  
 Each to a crib with choicest grain furcharg'd,  
 Part in a portico, profusely grac'd  
 With rich magnificence, the chariot plac'd :  
 Then to the dome the friendly pair invite,  
 Who eye the dazzling roofs with vast delight ;  
 Resplendent as the blaze of summer-noon,  
 Or the pale radiance of the midnight moon,  
 From room to room their eager view they bend ;  
 Thence to the bath, a beauteous pile, descend ;  
 Where a bright damsel-train attend the guests  
 With liquid odours, and embroider'd vests.  
 Refresh'd, they wait them to the bow'r of state,  
 Where circled with his peers Atrides sat :  
 Thron'd next the king, a fair attendant brings  
 The purest product of the crystal springs ;

50

55

60

v. 37. *Menelaus blames Eteoneus* ] This is the first appearance of Menelaus ; and surely nothing can more reconcile him to the favour of the spectators, than those amiable colours in which the poet paints him. There is an overflow of humanity and gratitude in his expressions, like that of Dido in Virgil,

“ Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.”

They contain a fine piece of morality, and teach that those men are more tender-hearted and humane who have felt the reverse of fortune, than those who have only lived in a condition of prosperity.



High on a massy vase of silver mold, 65  
 The burnish'd laver flames with solid gold :  
 In solid gold the purple vintage flows,  
 And on the board a second banquet rose.  
 When thus the king with hospitable port : —  
 Accept this welcome to the Spartan court ; 70  
 The waste of nature let the feast repair,  
 Then your high lineage and your names declare :  
 Say from what scepter'd ancestry ye claim,  
 Recorded eminent in deathless fame ?  
 For vulgar parents cannot stamp their race 75  
 With signatures of such majestic grace.

Ceasing, benevolent he straight assigns  
 The royal portion of the choicest chine  
 To each accepted friend : with grateful haste  
 They share the honours of the rich repast. 80  
 Suffic'd, soft-whispering thus to Nestor's son,  
 His head reclin'd, young Ithacus begun.

View'st thou unmov'd, O ever-honour'd most !  
 These prodigies of art, and wond'rous cost !  
 Above, beneath, around the palace shines 85  
 The sumless treasure of exhausted mines ;  
 The spoils of elephants the roofs inlay,  
 And studded amber darts a golden ray :  
 Such, and not nobler, in the realms above  
 My wonder dictates is the dome of Jove. 90

The monarch took the word, and grave reply'd.  
 Presumptuous are the vaunts, and vain the pride

v. 81. *Soft-whispering thus to Nestor's son.*] This may be thought a circumstance of no importance, and very trivial in Telemachus ; but it shews his address and decency : he whispers, to avoid the appearance of a flatterer, or to conceal his own inexperience, in shewing too much surprise at the magnificence of the palace of Menelaus. Eustathius.

v. 91. *The monarch took the word, &c.*] The ancients, says Eustathius, observe the prudence of Menelaus, in his reply to Telemachus ; and the prudence of Telemachus in his behaviour to Menelaus : Menelaus denies not his riches and magnificence ; but to



Of man, who dares in pomp with Jove contest,  
 Unchang'd, immortal, and supremely blest !  
 With all my affluence when my woes are weigh'd, 95  
 Envy will own, the purchase dearly paid.  
 For eight slow-circling years by tempest tost,  
 From Cyprus to the far Phœnician coast,  
 (Sidon the capital) I stretch'd my toil  
 Thro' regions fatten'd with the flows of Nile. 100  
 Next, Æthiopia's utmost bound explore,  
 And the parch'd borders of th' Arabian shore :  
 Then warp my voyage on the southern gales,  
 O'er the warm Libyan wave to spread my sails :

take off the envy which they might attract, he throws the calamities he has undergone into the contrary scale, and balances his felicity with his misfortunes : and Telemachus coming into the palace at the time of an entertainment, chuses to satisfy his curiosity rather than his appetite. Plutarch, I confess, condemns Telemachus of inexperience ; who when he saw the palace of Nestor furnished only with things useful to life, as beds, tables, &c. is seized with no admiration ; but the superfluities of Menelaus, his ivory, amber and gold, &c. carry him into transports : whereas a Socrates or a Diogenes would have exclaimed, What heaps of vanities have I beheld ! It is true, such a judgment might become philosophers ; but who, as Dacier observes, can think the character of a Socrates or a Diogenes suitable to young Telemachus ? What is decent in a prince, and a young man, would ill become the gravity and wisdom of a philosopher.

v. 100. *Thro' regions fatten'd with the flows of Nile.  
 Next, Æthiopia, &c.]*

The words are in the original Αἰγυπλίης ἐπαλήθεις, others read them Αἰγυπλίης ἐπ' ἀληθεῖς, from their veracity in oracles, for which they were very famous ; and indeed the word ἐπαλήθεις is not necessary, it being used in the very same sentence, though it must be confessed such repetitions are frequent in Homer. There is also a different reading of the word ἐρέμους ; some have it ἐρέμους, or Blacks ; others, Ζιδονίης Ἀράβας τε ; but the common reading is thought the best. The Erembi are the Arabian Troglodytes. Strabo informs us, that in former ages the bounds of the Æthiopians lay near to Thebes in Ægypt, so that Menelaus travelling to Thebes, might with ease visit the Æthiopians. Others have without any foundation imagined that he passed the streights of Gibraltar, and sailed to the Indies. Sidon is the capital of the Phœnicians. Eustathius.



That happy clime ! where each revolving year 105  
 The teeming ewes a triple offspring bear ;  
 And two fair crescents of tranfluent-horn  
 The brows of all their young increafe adorn :  
 The shepherd fwains with fure abundance bleft,  
 On the fat flock and rural dainties feaft ; 110  
 Nor want of herbage makes the dairy fail,  
 But every feafon fills the foaming pail.  
 Whilft heaping unwilh'd wealth, I diftant roam ;  
 The beft of brothers, at his natal home,

v. 105. — — — *where each revolving year*  
*The teeming ewes, &c.]*

These ſheep, as deſcribed by Homer, may be thought the creation of the poet, and not the production of nature : but Herodotus, ſays Eufthius, writes, that in Scythia the oxen have no horns through the extremity of the cold : he quotes this very verſe, rightly intimating, adds Herodotus, that in hot regions the horns of cattle ſhoot very ſpeedily. Aristotle directly asserts, that in Libya the young ones of horned cattle have horns immediately after they are brought into the world. So that Aristotle and Herodotus vindicate Homer. The poet adds, that the ſheep breed three times in the year ; theſe words may have a different interpretation, and imply that they breed in three ſeaſons of the year, and not only in the ſpring, as in other countries ; or that the ſheep have at once three lambs ; but the firſt is the better interpretation. Athenæus upon this paſſage writes, that there are things in other countries no leſs ſtrange than what Homer relates of theſe ſheep of Libya. Thus in Luſitania, a country of Spain, now Portugal, there is a wonderful fruitfulneſs in all cattle, by reaſon of the excellent temper of the air ; the fruits there never rot, and the roſes, violets and aſparagus, never fail above three months in the year. Eufthius.

v. 114. *The beſt of brothers, ———*  
*——— a traitreſs wife.]*

Menelaus neither mentions Agamemnon, Clytemneſtra, nor Ægyſthus by name ; a juſt indignation and reſentment is the occaſion of his ſuppreſſing the names of Clytemneſtra and Ægyſthus. Through the whole Iliad Menelaus is deſcribed as a very affectionate brother, and the love he bears Agamemnon is the reaſon why he paſſes by his name in ſilence. We ſee that he diſpatches the whole in one verſe and a half ; Neſtor had told the ſtory pretty largely in the preceding book, and as he was a perſon leſs nearly concerned, might ſpeak of it with more eaſe and better temper than Menelaus ; the poet avoids a needleſs repetition, and a repetition



By the dire fury of a traitress wife, 115  
 Ends the sad evening of a stormy life :  
 Whence with incessant grief my soul annoy'd,  
 These riches are possess'd, but not enjoy'd !  
 My wars, the copious theme of ev'ry tongue,  
 To you, your fathers have recorded long : 120  
 How fav'ring heav'n repaid my glorious toils  
 With a sack'd palace, and barbaric spoils.  
 Oh ! had the gods so large a boon deny'd,  
 And life, the just equivalent, supply'd  
 To those brave warriors, who with glory fir'd, 125  
 Far from their country in my cause expir'd !  
 Still in short intervals of pleasing woe,  
 Regardful of the friendly dues I owe,  
 I to the glorious dead, for ever dear !  
 Indulge the tribute of a grateful tear. 130

too of a story universally known to all the Greeks. The death of Agamemnon is distributed into four places in the *Odyssey* ; Nestor, Menelaus, Proteus, and the shade of Agamemnon in the eleventh book, all relate it, and every one very properly. Proteus as a prophet more fully than Nestor and Menelaus, and Agamemnon more fully than them all, as being best acquainted with it. Eustathius.

v. 119. *My wars, the copious theme, &c.*] In the original Menelaus says, " I have destroyed a house," &c. There is an ambiguity in the expression, as Eustathius observes : for it may either signify the house of Priam, or his own in Argos ; if it be understood of his own, then the meaning is, " I have indeed great wealth, but have purchased it with the loss of my people ; I could be content with the third part of it, if I could restore those to life who have perished before Troy." If it be understood of the kingdom of Priam, the regret he shews will still appear the greater. He is enumerating his domestic happiness, and his foreign conquest of Troy ; but he throws the destruction of so many brave men who fell before it, in the contrary scale ; and it so far outweighs both his wealth and his glory, that they both are joyless to him. Either of these interpretations shew an excellent temper of humanity in Menelaus, who thinks the effusion of blood too dear a price for glory. At the same time the poet gives an admirable picture of human nature, which is restless in the pursuit of what it miscalls happiness, and when in possession of it, neglects it. But the disquiet of Menelaus arises not from inconstancy of temper, but wisdom ; it shews that all happiness is unsatisfactory.



But oh ! Ulysses — deeper than the rest  
 That sad idea wounds my anxious breast !  
 My heart bleeds fresh with agonizing pain ;  
 The bowl, and tasteful viands tempt in vain,  
 Nor sleep's soft pow'r can close my streaming eyes, 135  
 When imag'd to my soul his sorrows rife.  
 No peril in my cause he ceas'd to prove,  
 His labours equall'd only by my love :  
 And both alike to bitter fortune born,  
 For him, to suffer, and for me to mourn ! 140  
 Whether he wanders on some friendly coast,  
 Or glides in Stygian gloom a pensive ghost,  
 No fame reveals ; but doubtful of his doom,  
 His good old fire with sorrow to the tomb  
 Declines his trembling steps ; untimely care 145  
 Withers the blooming vigour of his heir ;  
 And the chaste partner of his bed and throne,  
 Wastes all her widow'd hours in tender moan.

While thus pathetic to the prince he spoke :  
 From the brave youth the streaming passion broke : 150  
 Studious to veil the grief, in vain repress,  
 His face he shrouded with his purple vest :  
 The conscious monarch pierc'd the coy disguise,  
 And view'd his filial love with vast surprise :

v. 131. *But oh ! Ulysses — &c.*] It is with admirable address that the poet falls into his subject: it is art, but it seems to be nature: this conduct has a double effect, it takes away all suspicion of flattery, for Menelaus is ignorant that the person with whom he discourses is Telemachus; this gives him a manifest evidence of the love he bears to Ulysses; the young man could not but be pleased with the praise of his father, and with the sincerity of it. It is also observable, that Menelaus builds his friendship for Ulysses upon a noble foundation; I mean the sufferings which Ulysses underwent for his friend: Menelaus ascribes not their affection to any familiarity or intercourse of entertainments, but to a more sincere cause, to the hazards which brave men undertake for a friend. In short, the friendship of Menelaus and Ulysses is the friendship of heroes. Eustathius.



Dubious to press the tender theme, or wait 155  
To hear the youth enquire his father's fate.

In this suspense bright Helen grac'd the room ;  
Before her breath'd a gale of rich perfume,  
So moves, adorn'd with each attractive grace,  
The silver-shafted goddess of the chace ! 160  
The feat of majesty Adraſte brings,  
With art illustrious, for the pomp of kings.  
To spread the pall (beneath the regal chair)  
Of softest woof, is bright Alcippe's care.  
A silver canister divinely wrought, 165  
In her soft hands the beauteous Phylo brought :

v. 157. — — — *bright Helen grac'd the room.*] Menelaus conjectured that the person he had entertained was the son of Ulysses, from the tears he shed at the name of his father, and from the resemblance there was between Ulysses and Telemachus ; it might therefore have been expected that Menelaus should immediately have acknowledged Telemachus, and not delayed a full discovery one moment, out of regard to his absent friend ; but Menelaus defers it upon a two-fold account, to give some time to Telemachus to indulge his sorrow for his father, and recover himself from it, and also to avoid the repetition of a discovery upon the appearance of Helen, who would be curious to know the condition of the strangers.

It may be necessary to say something concerning Helen, that fatal beauty that engaged Greece and Asia in arms ; she is drawn in the same colours in the Odyssey as in the Iliad ; it is a vicious character, but the colours are so admirably softened by the art of the poet, that we pardon her infidelity. Menelaus is an uncommon instance of conjugal affection, he forgives a wife who had been false to him, and receives her into a full degree of favour. But perhaps the reader might have been shocked at it, and prejudiced against Helen as a person that ought to be forgot, or have her name only mentioned to disgrace it : the poet therefore, to reconcile her to his reader, brings her in as a penitent, condemning her own infidelity in very strong expressions ; she shews true modesty, when she calls herself impudent, and by this conduct we are inclined, like Menelaus, to forgive her.

v. 161, &c. *Adraſte, Alcippe, Helen's maids.*] It has been observed, that Helen has not the same attendants in the Odyssey as she had in the Iliad ; they perhaps might be Trojans, and consequently be left in their own country : or rather, it was an act of prudence in Menelaus, not to suffer those servants about her who had been her attendants and confidants in her infidelity. Eustathius.



To Sparta's queen of old the radiant vase  
 Alcandra gave, a pledge of royal grace :  
 For Polybus her lord, (whose sov'reign sway  
 The wealthy tribes of Pharian Thebes obey) 170  
 When to that court Atrides came, carest  
 With vast munificence th' imperial guest :  
 Two lavers from the richest ore refin'd,  
 With silver tripods, the kind host assign'd ;  
 And bounteous, from the royal treasure told 175  
 Ten equal talents of refulgent gold.  
 Alcandra, consort of his high command,  
 A golden distaff gave to Helen's hand ;  
 And that rich vase, with living sculpture wrought,  
 Which heap'd with wool the beauteous Phylo brought :  
 The filken fleece impurpl'd for the loom, 181  
 Rival'd the hyacinth in vernal bloom.  
 The sovereign seat then Jove-born Helen press'd,  
 And pleasing thus her scepter'd lord address'd.

Who grace our palace now, that friendly pair, 185  
 Speak they their lineage, or their names declare ?  
 Uncertain of the truth, yet uncontroll'd  
 Hear me the bodings of my breast unfold.  
 With wonder wrapt, on yonder cheek I trace  
 The feature of the Ulyssæan race : 190  
 Diffus'd o'er each resembling line appear,  
 In just similitude, the grace and air  
 Of young Telemachus ! the lovely boy,  
 Who blest'd Ulysses with a father's joy,

v. 192. — — — — *the grace and air*  
*Of young Telemachus ! ———]*

It may seem strange that Helen should at first view recollect the features of Ulysses in Telemachus ; and that Menelaus, who was better acquainted with him, and his constant friend, should not make the same observation. But Athenæus, to reconcile this to probability, says, that women are curious and skilful observers of the likeness of children to parents, for one particular reason, that they may, upon finding any dissimilitude, have the pleasure of hinting at the unchastity of others.



What-time the Greeks combin'd their social arms, 195  
T' avenge the stain of my ill-fated charms!

Just is thy thought, the king assenting cries,  
Methinks Ulysses strikes my wond'ring eyes:  
Full shines the father in the filial frame,  
His port, his features, and his shape the same: 200  
Such quick regards his sparkling eyes bestow;  
Such wavy ringlets o'er his shoulders flow!  
And when he heard the long disastrous store  
Of cares, which in my cause Ulysses bore;  
Dismay'd, heart-wounded with paternal woes, 205  
Above restraint the tide of sorrow rose:  
Cautious to let the gushing grief appear,  
His purple garment veil'd the falling tear.

See there confest, Pisistratus replies,  
The genuine worth of Ithacus the wise! 210  
Of that heroic fire the youth is sprung,  
But modest awe hath chain'd his tim'rous tongue.  
Thy voice, O king! with pleas'd attention heard,  
Is like the dictates of a god rever'd.

With him at Nestor's high command I came, 215  
Whose age I honour with a parent's name.  
By adverse destiny constrain'd to sue  
For counsel and redress, he sues to you.  
Whatever ill the friendless orphan bears,  
Bereav'd of parents in his infant years, 220  
Still must the wrong'd Telemachus sustain,  
If hopeful of your aid, he hopes in vain:  
Affianc'd in your friendly pow'r alone,  
The youth wou'd vindicate the vacant throne.

Is Sparta blest, and these desiring eyes 225  
View my friend's son? (the king exulting cries)  
Son of my friend, by glorious toils approv'd,  
Whose sword was sacred to the man he lov'd:  
Mirrour of constant faith, rever'd, and mourn'd!—  
When Troy was ruin'd, had the chief return'd, 230



No Greek an equal space had e'er possess'd,  
 Of dear affection, in my grateful breast.  
 I, to confirm the mutual joys we shar'd,  
 For his abode a capital prepar'd;  
 Argos the seat of sovereign rule I chose; 235  
 Fair in the plan the future palace rose,  
 Where my Ulysses and his race might reign,  
 And portion to his tribes the wide domain.  
 To them my vassals had resign'd a soil,  
 With teeming plenty to reward their toil. 240  
 There with commutual zeal we both had strove  
 In acts of dear benevolence, and love:  
 Brothers in peace, not rivals in command,  
 And death alone dissolv'd the friendly band!  
 Some envious pow'r the blissful scene destroys; 245  
 Vanish'd are all the visionary joys:  
 The soul of friendship to my hope is lost,  
 Fated to wander from his natal coast!

He ceas'd; a gust of grief began to rise:  
 Fast streams a tide from beauteous Helen's eyes; 250

v. 234. *For his abode a capital prepar'd.*] The poet puts these words in the mouth of Menelaus, to express the sincerity of his friendship to Ulysses; he intended him all advantage, and no detriment: we must therefore conclude, that Ulysses was still to retain his sovereignty over Ithaca, and only remove to Argos, to live with so sincere a friend as Menelaus. Eustathius.

v. 249. ——— *a gust of grief began to rise, &c.*] It has been observed through the Iliad, and may be observed through the whole Odyssey, that it was not a disgrace to the greatest heroes to shed tears; and indeed I cannot see why it should be an honour to any man, to be able to divest himself of human nature so far as to appear insensible upon the most affecting occasions. No man is born a stoic: it is art, not nature; tears are only a shame, when the cause from whence they flow is mean or vicious. Here Menelaus laments a friend, Telemachus a father, Pisistratus a brother: but from what cause arise the tears of Helen? It is to be remembered that Helen is drawn in the softest colours in the Odyssey; the character of the adulteress is lost in that of the penitent: the name of Ulysses throws her into tears, because she is the occasion of all the sufferings of that brave man; the poet makes her the first in sorrow, as she is the cause of all their tears.



Fast for the fire the filial sorrows flow;  
 The weeping monarch swells the mighty woe:  
 Thy cheeks, Pisistratus, the tears bedew,  
 While pictur'd to thy mind appear'd in view  
 Thy martial \* brother: on the Phrygian plain 255  
 Extended pale, by swarthy Memnon slain!  
 But silence soon the son of Nestor broke,  
 And melting with fraternal pity spoke.

Frequent, O king, was Nestor wont to raise  
 And charm attention with thy copious praise: 260  
 To crown thy various gifts, the sage assign'd  
 The glory of a firm capacious mind:  
 With that superiour attribute controul  
 This unavailing impotence of soul.  
 Let not your roof with echoing grief resound, 265  
 Now for the feast the friendly bowl is crown'd:  
 But when from dewy shade emerging bright,  
 Aurora streaks the sky with orient light,  
 Let each deplore his dead: the rites of woe  
 Are all, alas! the living can bestow: 270  
 O'er the congenial dust injoin'd to shear  
 The graceful curl, and drop the tender tear.

\* Antilochus.

v. 265. *Let not your roof with echoing grief resound,  
 Now for the feast the friendly bowl is crown'd.]*

It may be asked why sorrow for the dead should be more unseasonable in the evening than the morning? Eustathius answers, lest others should look upon our evening tears as the effect of wine, and not of love to the dead.

“ Intempestivus venit inter pocula fletus,  
 “ Nec lacrymas dulci fas est miscere falerno.”

I fancy there may be a more rational account given of this expression; the time of feasting was ever looked upon as a time of joy and thanksgiving to the gods; it bore a religious veneration among the ancients, and consequently to shed tears when they should express their gratitude to the gods with joy, was esteemed a profanation.



Then mingling in the mournful pomp with you,  
 I'll pay my brother's ghost a warrior's due,  
 And mourn the brave Antilochus, a name 275  
 Not unrecorded in the rolls of fame:  
 With strength and speed superiour form'd, in fight  
 To face the foe, or intercept his flight:  
 Too early snatch'd by fate ere known to me!  
 I boast a witness of his worth in thee. 280

Young and mature! the monarch thus rejoins,  
 In thee renew'd the soul of Nestor shines:  
 Form'd by the care of that consummate sage,  
 In early bloom an oracle of age.  
 Whene'er his influence Jove vouchsafes to show'r 285  
 To bless the natal, and the nuptial hour;  
 From the great fire transmissive to the race,  
 The boon devolving gives distinguish'd grace.  
 Such, happy Nestor! was thy glorious doom;  
 Around thee full of years, thy offspring bloom, 290  
 Expert of arms, and prudent in debate;  
 The gifts of heaven to guard thy hoary state.  
 But now let each becalm his troubled breast,  
 Wash, and partake serene the friendly feast.  
 To move thy suit, Telemachus, delay, 295  
 'Till heav'n's revolving lamp restores the day.

He said, Asphalion swift the laver brings;  
 Alternate all partake the grateful springs:  
 Then from the rites of purity repair,  
 And with keen gust the sav'ry viands share. 300  
 Meantime with genial joy to warm the soul,  
 Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl:

v. 302. *Bright Helen mix'd a mirth-inspiring bowl, &c.*] The conjectures about this cordial of Helen have been almost infinite. Some take nepenthes allegorically, to signify history, music, or philosophy. Plutarch in the first of the Symposiasts affirms it to be, discourse well suiting the present passions and conditions of the hearers. Macrobius is of the same opinion, " Delinimentum illud quod Helena vino miscuit, non herba fuit, non ex Indiâ



Temper'd with drugs of sov'reign use, t' assuage  
The boiling bosom of tumultuous rage;

“succus, sed narrandi opportunitas, quæ hospitem mœroris oblitum flexit ad gaudium.” What gave a foundation to this fiction of Homer, as Dacier observes, might be this. Diodorus writes that in Ægypt, and chiefly at Heliopolis, the same with Thebes, where Menelaus sojourned, as has been already observed, there lived women who boasted of certain potions, which not only made the unfortunate forget all their calamities, but drove away the most violent sallies of grief or anger. Eusebius directly affirms, that even in his time the women of Diospolis were able to calm the rage of grief or anger by certain potions. Now whether this be truth or fiction, it fully vindicates Homer, since a poet may make use of a prevailing, though false opinion.

Milton mentions this nepenthes in his excellent masque of *Comus*.

————— Behold this cordial julep here,  
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds!  
Not that nepenthes which the wife of Thone  
In Ægypt gave to Jove-born Helena,  
Is of such pow'r as this to stir up joy,  
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.

But that there may be something more than fiction in this is very probable, since the Ægyptians were so notoriously skilled in physic; and particularly since this very Thon, or Thonis, or Thoon, is reported by the ancients to have been the inventor of physic among the Ægyptians. The description of this nepenthes agrees admirably with what we know of the qualities and effects of opium.

It is further said of Thon, that he was king of Canopus, and entertained Menelaus hospitably before he had seen Helen; but afterwards falling in love with her, and offering violence, he was slain by Menelaus. From his name the Ægyptians gave the name of Thoth to the first month of their year, and also to a city the name of Thonis. Ælian writes, that Menelaus, when he travelled to the Æthiopians, committed Helen to the protection of Thonis; that she fell in love with him, that Polydamna growing jealous confined her to the island of Pharos, but gave her an herb to preserve her from the poison of serpents, there frequent, which from Helen was called Helenium. Strabo writes, that at Canopus, on the mouth of the Nile, there stands a city named Thonies, from king Thonis, who received Helen and Menelaus. Herodotus relates, that Thonis was governour of Canopus, that he represented the injury which Paris had done to Menelaus, to Proteus, who reigned in Memphis. Eustathius.

This last remark from Herodotus is sufficient to shew, that Homer is not so fictitious as is generally imagined, that there really



To clear the cloudy front of wrinkled care, 305  
 And dry the tearful sluices of despair:  
 Charm'd with that virtuous draught, th' exalted mind  
 All sense of woe delivers to the wind.  
 Tho' on the blazing pile his parent lay,  
 Or a lov'd brother groan'd his life away, 310  
 Or darling son, oppress'd by ruffian-force,  
 Fell breathless at his feet, a mangled corse;  
 From morn to eve, impassive and serene,  
 The man entranc'd would view the deathful scene.  
 These drugs, so friendly to the joys of life, 315  
 Bright Helen learn'd from Thone's imperial wife;  
 Who sway'd the scepter, where prolific Nile  
 With various simples clothes the fat'ned soil.  
 With wholesome herbage mix'd, the direful bane  
 Of vegetable venom, taints the plain; 320  
 From Pæon sprung, their patron-god imparts  
 To all the Pharian race his healing arts.  
 The bev'rage now prepar'd t' inspire the feast,  
 The circle thus the beauteous queen address'd.  
 Thron'd in omnipotence, supremest Jove 325  
 Tempers the fates of human race above;  
 By the firm sanction of his sov'reign will,  
 Alternate are decreed our good and ill.  
 To feastful mirth be this white hour assign'd,  
 And sweet discourse, the banquet of the mind. 330  
 Myself assisting in the social joy,  
 Will tell Ulysses' bold exploit in Troy:

was a king named Proteus, that the poet builds his fables upon truth, and that it was truth that originally determined Homer to introduce Proteus into his poetry; but I intend to explain this more largely in the story of Proteus.

v. 331. *Myself* —————  
*Will tell Ulysses' bold exploit* —————]

What is here related shews the necessity of the introduction of Helen, and the use the poet makes of it: she is not brought in merely as a "muta persona," to fill up the number of persons; but



Sole witness of the deed I now declare ;  
 Speak you (who saw) his wonders in the war.

Seam'd o'er with wounds, which his own fabre gave,  
 In the vile habit of a village-slave, 336  
 The foe deceiv'd, he pass'd the tented plain,  
 In Troy to mingle with the hostile train.  
 In this attire secure from searching eyes,  
 'Till haply piercing thro' the dark disguise 340  
 The chief I challeng'd; he, whose practis'd wit  
 Knew all the serpent-mazes of deceit,

she relates several incidents, in which she herself was concerned, and which she could only know; and consequently not only diversifies, but carries on the design of the story. Eustathius.

v. 335. *Seam'd o'er with wounds, &c.*] The poet here shews his judgment in passing over many instances of the sufferings of Ulysses, and relating this piece of conduct, not mentioned by any other author. The art of Ulysses in extricating himself from difficulties is laid down as the ground-work of the poem, he is *ωολύτροπος*, and this is an excellent example of it. This further shews the necessity of the appearance of Helen, no other person being acquainted with the story. If this stratagem be not a reality, yet it bears the resemblance of it; and Megabyzus the Persian (as Eustathius observes) practised it, as we learn from history. We may reasonably conjecture that Ulysses was committed to Helen, in hopes that he would discover the affairs of the army more freely to her than any other person; for what could be more agreeable to a Greek, than to be committed to the care of a Greek, as Ulysses was to Helen? By the same conduct the poet raises the character of Helen, by making her shew her repentance by an act of generosity to her countryman. The original says she gave an oath to Ulysses not to discover him before he was in safety in the Grecian army: now this does not imply that she ever discovered to the Trojans that Ulysses had entered Troy: the contrary opinion is most probable; for it cannot be imagined but all Troy must have been incensed greatly against her, had they known that she had concealed one of their mortal enemies, and dismissed him in safety: it was sufficient for Ulysses to take her oath that she would not discover him, till he was in security: he left her future conduct to her own discretion. It is probable that she furnished Ulysses with a sword, for in his return he slew many Trojans: he came to Troy, observes Eustathius, in rags, and like a slave; and to have concealed a sword, would have endangered his life upon a discovery of it, and given strong suspicions of an impostor.



Eludes my search : but when his form I view'd  
 Fresh from the bath with fragrant oils renew'd,  
 His limbs in military purple dress'd ; 345  
 Each brightning grace the genuine Greek confess'd.  
 A previous pledge of sacred faith obtain'd,  
 'Till he the lines and Argive fleet regain'd,  
 To keep his stay conceal'd ; the chief declar'd  
 The plans of war against the town prepar'd. 350  
 Exploring then the secrets of the state,  
 He learn'd what best might urge the Dardan fate :  
 And safe returning to the Grecian host,  
 Sent many a shade to Pluto's dreary coast.  
 Loud grief resounded thro' the tow'rs of Troy, 355  
 But my pleas'd bosom glow'd with secret joy :  
 For then with dire remorse, and conscious shame,  
 I view'd th' effects of that disastrous flame,  
 Which kindled by th' imperious queen of love,  
 Constrain'd me from my native realm to rove : 360  
 And oft in bitterness of soul deplor'd  
 My absent daughter, and my dearer lord ;

v. 351. *Exploring then the secrets of the state.*] The word *σπόνος* is here used in a large sense : it takes in all the observations Ulysses made during his continuance in Troy, it takes in the designs and counsels of the enemy, his measuring the gates, the height of the walls, the easiest place for an assault or ambush, the taking away the Palladium, or whatever else a wise man may be supposed to observe, or act, in execution of such a stratagem. Eustathius.

v. 357. *For then with dire remorse, &c.*] The conclusion of this speech is very artful : Helen ascribes her seduction to Venus, and mentions nothing of Paris. Instead of naming Troy, she conceals it, and only says she was carried thither, leaving Troy to the imagination of Menelaus ; she suffers not herself to mention names so odious now to herself, and ever to Menelaus, as Paris and Troy. She compliments Menelaus very handsomely, and says, that he wanted no accomplishment either in mind or body : it being the nature of man not to resent the injuries of a wife so much upon the account of her being corrupted, but of the preference she gives to another person ; he looks upon such a preference as the most affecting part of the injury. Eustathius.



Admir'd among the first of human race,  
For ev'ry gift of mind, and manly grace.

Right well, reply'd the king, your speech displays  
The matchless merit of the chief you praise: 366  
Heroes in various climes myself have found,  
For martial deeds, and depth of thought renown'd:  
But Ithacus, unrival'd in his claim,  
May boast a title to the loudest fame: 370  
In battle calm, he guides the rapid storm,  
Wise to resolve, and patient to perform.  
What wond'rous conduct in the chief appear'd,  
When the vast fabric of the steed we rear'd!  
Some dæmon anxious for the Trojan doom, 375  
Urg'd you with great Deiphobus to come,

v. 365. *Menelaus's answer.*] The judgment of the poet in continuing the story concerning Ulysses, is not observed by any commentator. Ulysses is the chief hero of the poem, every thing should have a reference to him, otherwise the narration stands still without any advance towards the conclusion of it. The poet therefore to keep Ulysses in our minds, dwells upon his sufferings and adventures: he supplies his not appearing in the present scene of action, by setting his character before us, and continually forcing his prudence, patience, and valour upon our observation. He uses the same art and judgment with relation to Achilles in the Iliad: the hero of the poem is absent from the chief scenes of action during much of the time which that poem comprises, but he is continually brought into the mind of the reader, by recounting his exploits and glory.

v. 375. *Some dæmon anxious for the Trojan doom.*] It is the observation of Eustathius, that these words are very artfully introduced to vindicate Helen; they imply that what she acted was by compulsion, and to evidence this more clearly, Deiphobus is given her for an attendant, as a spy upon her actions, that she might not conceal any thing that should happen, but act her part well, by endeavouring to deceive the Greeks in favour of Troy. It is the dæmon, not Helen, that is in fault; this, continues Eustathius, answers many objections that lie against Helen: for if she was a real penitent, as she herself affirms, how comes she to endeavour to deceive the Greeks by the disguise of her voice, into more misery than had yet arisen from a ten years war? Or indeed is it credible that any person could modulate her voice so artfully as to resemble so many voices? And how could the Greeks inclosed in the wooden horse believe that their wives who were in



T' explore the fraud ; with guile oppos'd to guile,  
Slow-pacing thrice around th' insidious pile ;

Greece, could be arrived in so short a space as they had been concealed there, from the various regions of Greece, and meet together in Troy ? Would the wives of these heroes come into an enemy's country, when the whole army, except these latent heroes, were retired from it ? This is ridiculous and impossible. I must confess there is great weight in these objections : but Eustathius answers all by the interposition of the *dæmon* ; and by an idle tradition that Helen had the name of Echo, from the faculty of mimicking sounds ; and that this gift was bestowed upon her by Venus when she married Menelaus, that she might be able to detect him, if he should prove false to her bed, by imitating the voice of the suspected person, (but Menelaus had more occasion for this faculty than Helen.) As for the excuse of the *dæmon*, it equally excuses all crimes : for instance, was Helen false to Menelaus ? The *dæmon* occasioned it. Does she act an impostor to destroy all her Grecian friends, and even Menelaus ? The *dæmon* compels her to it. The *dæmon* compels her to go with Deiphobus, to surround the horse thrice, to sound the sides of it, to endeavour to surprise the latent Greeks by an imitation of the voices of their wives, and in short, to act like a person that was very sincere in mischief.

Dacier takes another course, and gives up Helen, but remarks the great address of Menelaus. Helen had, said she, long desired nothing so much as to return to Lacedæmon ; and her heart had long been wholly turned to Menelaus : Menelaus is not at all convinced of this pretended sincerity ; but it would have been too gross, after he had taken her again to his bed, to convict her of falshood : he therefore contents himself barely to reply, that some *dæmon*, an enemy to the Greeks, had forced her to a conduct disagreeable to her sincerity. This (continues Dacier) is an artful, but severe irony.

As for the objection concerning the impossibility of the Greeks believing their wives could be in Troy ; she answers, that the authors of this objection have not sufficiently considered human nature. The voice of a beloved person might of a sudden, and by surprise, draw from any person a word involuntary, before he has time to make reflection. This undoubtedly is true, where circumstances make an imposture probable ; but here is an impossibility ; it is utterly impossible to believe the wives of these heroes could be in Troy. Besides, Menelaus himself tells us, that even he had fallen into the snare, but Ulysses prevented it ; this adds to the incredibility of the story ; for if this faculty of mimicry was given upon his marriage with Helen, it was nothing new to him ; he must be supposed to be acquainted with it, and consequently be the less liable to surprise : nay it is not impossible, but



Each noted leader's name you thrice invoke,  
 Your accent varying as their spouses spoke: 380  
 The pleasing sounds each latent warrior warm'd,  
 But most Tydides' and my heart alarm'd:  
 To quit the steed we both impatient press,  
 Threat'ning to answer from the dark recess.  
 Unmov'd the mind of Ithacus remain'd: 385  
 And the vain ardours of our love restrain'd:  
 But Anticlus unable to controul,  
 Spoke loud the language of his yearning soul:  
 Ulysses straight with indignation fir'd,  
 (For so the common care of Greece requir'd) 390  
 Firm to his lips his forceful hands apply'd,  
 'Till on his tongue the flutt'ring murmurs dy'd.  
 Meantime Minerva from the fraudulent horse,  
 Back to the court of Priam bent your course.  
 Inclement fate! Telemachus replies, 395  
 Frail is the boasted attribute of wise:  
 The leader, mingling with the vulgar host,  
 Is in the common mass of matter lost!  
 But now let sleep the painful waste repair  
 Of sad reflection, and corroding care. 400  
 He ceas'd; the menial fair that round her wait,  
 At Helen's beck prepare the room of state;

the experiment might have been made upon him before Helen fled away with Paris.

In short, I think this passage wants a further vindication; the circumstances are low, if not incredible. Virgil, the great imitator of Homer, has given us a very different and more noble description of the destruction of Troy: he has not thought fit to imitate him in this description.

If we allow Helen to act by compulsion, to have feared the Trojans, and that Deiphobus was sent as a spy upon her actions; yet this is no vindication of her conduct: she still acts a mean part, and through fear becomes an accomplice in endeavouring to betray and ruin the Greeks.

I shall just add, that after the death of Paris, Helen marries Deiphobus; that the story of the wooden horse is probably founded upon the taking of Troy by an engine called a horse, as the like engine was called a ram by the Romans.



Beneath an ample portico, they spread  
The downy fleece to form the slumbr'ous bed ;  
And o'er soft palls of purple grain, unfold 405  
Rich tapestry, stiff with inwoven gold :  
Then thro' th' illumin'd dome, to balmy rest  
Th' obsequious herald guides each princely guest :  
While to his regal bow'r the king ascends,  
And beauteous Helen on her lord attends. 410

Soon as the morn, in orient purple drest,  
Unbarr'd the portal of the roseate east,  
The monarch rose ; magnificent to view,  
Th' imperial mantle o'er his vest he threw :  
The glitt'ring zone athwart his shoulder cast, 415  
A starry falchion low-depending grac'd ;  
Clasp'd on his feet th' embroider'd sandals shine ;  
And forth he moves, majestic and divine :  
Instant to young Telemachus he press'd,  
And thus benevolent his speech address'd. 420

Say, royal youth, sincere of soul, report  
What cause hath led you to the Spartan court ?  
Do public or domestic cares constrain  
This toilsome voyage o'er the surgy main ?

O highly favour'd delegate of Jove ! 425  
(Replies the prince) inflam'd with filial love,  
And anxious hope, to hear my parent's doom,  
A suppliant to your royal court I come.  
Our sov'reign seat a lewd usurping race  
With lawless riot, and mis-rule disgrace ; 430  
To pamper'd insolence devoted fall  
Prime of the flock, and choicest of the stall ;  
For wild ambition wings their bold desire,  
And all to mount th' imperial bed aspire.  
But prostrate I implore, oh king ! relate 435  
The mournful series of my father's fate :



Each known disaster of the man disclose,  
 Born by his mother to a world of woes!  
 Recite them! nor in erring pity fear  
 To wound with storied grief the filial ear: 440  
 If e'er Ulysses, to reclaim your right,  
 Avow'd his zeal in council or in fight,  
 If Phrygian camps the friendly toils attest,  
 To the fire's merit give the son's request.

Deep from his inmost soul Atrides sigh'd, 445  
 And thus indignant to the prince reply'd:  
 Heav'ns! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train  
 An absent hero's nuptial joys profane!  
 So with her young, amid the woodland shades,  
 A tim'rous hind the lion's court invades, 450  
 Leaves in the fatal lair the tender fawns,  
 Climbs the green cliff, or feeds the flow'ry lawns:

v. 447. *Heav'ns! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train.*] Menelaus is fired with indignation at the injuries offered his friend by the suitors: he breaks out into an exclamation, and in a just contempt vouchsafes not to mention them: he thinks he fully distinguishes whom he intends, by calling them ἀνάλκιδες αὐτοῖ, "those cowards." The comparison which he introduces is very just, they are the fawns, Ulysses is the lion.

This is the first simile that Homer has inserted in the *Odyssey*; but I cannot think it proceeded from a barrenness of invention, or through phlegm in the declension of his years, as some have imagined. The nature of the poem requires a difference of style from the *Iliad*! The *Iliad* rushes along like a torrent; the *Odyssey* flows gently on like a deep stream, with a smooth tranquillity; Achilles is all fire, Ulysses all wisdom.

The simile in Homer is really beautiful; but in Hobbs ridiculous.

As when a stag and hind ent'ring the den  
 Of th' absent lion, lulls his whelps with tales,  
 Of hills and dales; the lion comes agen,  
 And tears them into pieces with his nails.

Can any thing be more foreign to the sense of Homer, or worse translated? He construes κρημνὰς ἐξερέσει, by telling stories of hills and dales to the lion's whelps, instead of "Juga investigat:" but such mistakes are so frequent in Hobbs, that one would almost suspect his learning in Greek: he has disgraced the best poet, and a very great historian; Homer, and Thucydides.



Meantime return'd, with dire remorseless sway  
 The monarch-savage rends the trembling prey.  
 With equal fury, and with equal fame, 455  
 Ulysses soon shall re-assert his claim.

O Jove, supreme, whom gods and men revere!  
 And \* thou, to whom 'tis given to gild the sphere!  
 With pow'r congenial join'd, propitious aid  
 The chief adopted by the martial maid! 460  
 Such to our wish the warrior soon restore,  
 As when contending on the Lesbian shore  
 His prowess Philomelides confess'd,  
 And loud-acclaiming Greeks the victor bless'd:  
 Then soon th' invaders of his bed and throne, 465  
 Their love presumptuous shall with life atone.

With patient ear, oh royal youth, attend  
 The storied labours of thy father's friend:  
 Fruitful of deeds, the copious tale is long,  
 But truth severe shall dictate to my tongue: 470  
 Learn what I heard the sea-born seer relate,  
 Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of fate.

Long on th' Ægyptian coast by calms confin'd,  
 Heav'n to my fleet refus'd a prosp'rous wind;  
 No vows had we preferr'd, nor victim slain! 475  
 For this the gods each fav'ring gale restrain:  
 Jealous, to see their high behests obey'd;  
 Severe, if men th' eternal rights evade.  
 High o'er a gulfy sea, the Pharian isle  
 Fronts the deep roar of disemboguing Nile: 480

\* Apollo.

v. 462. *As when contending on the Lesbian shore.*] The poet here gives an account of one of Ulysses's adventures. Philomelides was king of Lesbos, and Eustathius observes, that there was a tradition, that Ulysses and Diomedes slew him, and turned a stately monument he had raised for himself into a public place for the reception of strangers.

v. 479. ——— *The Pharian isle.*] This description of Pharos has given great trouble to the critics and geographers; it is gene-



Her distance from the shore, the course begun  
 At dawn, and ending with the setting sun,  
 A galley measures; when the stiffer gales  
 Rise on the poop, and fully stretch the sails.

rally concluded, that the distance of Pharos is about seven stadia from Alexandria; Ammianus Marcellinus mentions this very passage thus; l. xxii. "Insula Pharos, ubi Protea cum Phocæ-  
 "rum gregibus diversatum Homerus fabulatur inflatus, à civita-  
 "tis littore mille passibus disparata," or, "about a mile distant  
 "from the shores." How then comes Homer to affirm it to be distant a full day's sail? Dacier answers, that Homer might have heard that the Nile, continually bringing down much earthy substance, had enlarged the continent: and knowing it not to be so distant in his time, took the liberty of a poet, and described it as still more distant in the days of Menelaus. But Dacier never sees a mistake in Homer. Had his poetry been worse if he had described the real distance of Pharos? It is allowable in a poet to disguise the truth, to adorn his story; but what ornament has he given his poetry by this enlargement? Bochart has fully proved that there is no accession to the continent from any substance that the Nile brings down with it: the violent agitation of the seas prohibit it from lodging, and forming itself into solidity. Eratosthenes is of opinion, that Homer was ignorant of the mouths of Nile: but Strabo answers, that his silence about them is not an argument of his ignorance, for neither has he ever mentioned where he was born. But Strabo does not enter fully into the meaning of Eratosthenes: Eratosthenes does not mean that Homer was ignorant of the mouths of Nile from his silence, but because he places Pharos at the distance of a whole day's sail from the continent. The only way to unite this inconsistency is to suppose, that the poet intended to specify the Pelusiæ mouth of Nile, from which Pharos stands about a day's sail: but this is submitted to the critics.

I cannot tell whether one should venture to make use of the word Nile in the translation, it is doubtless an anachronism; that name being unknown in the times of Homer and Menelaus, when the Nile was called *Ægyptus*. Homer in this very book

————— Αἰγύπτῳ Διὶ περὶ Πόλιν.

Yet on the other hand, this name of *Ægyptus* is so little known, that a common reader would scarce distinguish the river from the country; and indeed universal custom has obtained for using the Latin name instead of the Grecian, in many other instances which are equally anachronisms: witness all the names of the gods and goddesses throughout Homer; Jupiter for Zeus, Juno for Erè, Neptune for Posidaon, &c.



There, anchor'd vessels safe in harbour lye, 485  
 Whilst limpid springs the failing cask supply.

And now the twentieth sun descending, laves  
 His glowing axle in the western waves ;  
 Still with expanded sails we court in vain  
 Propitious winds, to waft us o'er the main : 490

And the pale mariner at once deplores  
 His drooping vigour, and exhausted stores.  
 When lo ! a bright cœrulean form appears,  
 The fair Eidothea ! to dispel my fears ;

Proteus her sire divine. With pity press'd, 495  
 Me sole the daughter of the deep address'd ;

What-time with hunger pin'd, my absent mates  
 Roam the wild isle in search of rural cates,  
 Bait the barb'd steel, and from the fishy flood  
 Appease th' afflictive fierce desire of food. 500

Whoe'er thou art (the azure goddess cries)  
 Thy conduct ill deserves the praise of wise :  
 Is death thy choice, or misery thy boast,  
 That here inglorious on a barren coast  
 Thy brave associates droop, a meagre train 505  
 With famine pale, and ask thy care in vain ?

v. 499. *Bait the barb'd steel, and from the fishy flood.*] Menelaus says, hunger was so violent among his companions, that they were compelled to eat fish. Plutarch in his *Symposiacs* observes, that among the Syrians and Greeks, to abstain from fish was esteemed a piece of sanctity ; that though the Greeks were encamped upon the Hellespont, there is not the least intimation that they eat fish, or any sea provision ; and that the companions of Ulysses, in the twelfth book of the *Odyssey*, never sought for fish till all their other provisions were consumed, and that the same necessity compelled them to eat the herds of the sun which induced them to taste fish. No fish is ever offered in sacrifice : the Pythagoreans in particular command fish not to be eaten more strictly than any other animal : fish afford no excuse at all for their destruction, they live as it were in another world, disturb not our air, consume not our fruits, or injure the waters ; and therefore the Pythagoreans, who were unwilling to offer violence to any animals, fed very little, or not at all on fishes. I thought it necessary to insert this from Plutarch, because it is an observation that explains other passages in the sequel of the *Odyssey*.



Struck with the kind reproach, I straight reply ;  
 Whate'er thy title in thy native sky,  
 A goddess sure ! for more than mortal grace  
 Speaks thee descendant of ætherial race : 510  
 Deem not, that here of choice my fleet remains ;  
 Some heav'nly pow'r averse my stay constrains :  
 O, piteous of my fate, vouchsafe to shew,  
 (For what's sequester'd from celestial view ?)  
 What pow'r becalms th' innavigable seas ? 515  
 What guilt provokes him, and what vows appease ?  
 I ceas'd, when affable the goddess cry'd ;  
 Observe, and in the truths I speak confide :  
 Th' orac'lous seer frequents the Pharian coast,  
 From whose high bed my birth divine I boast : 520  
 Proteus, a name tremendous o'er the main,  
 The delegate of Neptune's wat'ry reign.

v. 521. *Proteus, a name tremendous o'er the main.* Eustathius enumerates various opinions concerning Proteus; some understand Proteus allegorically to signify the first matter which undergoes all changes; others make him an emblem of true friendship, which ought not to be settled till it has been tried in all shapes: others make Proteus a picture of a flatterer, who takes up all shapes, and suits himself to all forms, in compliance to the temper of the person whom he courts. The Greeks (observes Diodorus) imagined all these metamorphoses of Proteus to have been borrowed from the practices of the Ægyptian kings, who were accustomed to wear the figures of lions, bulls or dragons in their diadems, as emblems of royalty, and sometimes that of trees, &c. not so much for ornament as terrour. Others took Proteus to be an enchanter; and Eustathius recounts several that were eminent in this art, as Crætes the Phliasian (which Dacier renders by mistake Calisthenes the physician) who when he pleased could appear all on fire, and assume other appearances to the astonishment of the spectators: such also was Xenophon, Scymnus of Tarentum, Philippides of Syracuse, Heraclitus of Mitylene, and Nymphodorus, all practisers of magical arts; and Eustathius recites that the Phocæ were made use of in their incantations. Some write that Proteus was an Ægyptian tumbler, who could throw himself into variety of figures and postures; others, a stage-player; others, that he was a great general, skilled in all the arts and stratagems of war: Dacier looks upon him to have been an enchanter, or *δαυματοποιός*. It is certain from Herodotus, that there was in the times of Menelaus, a



Watch with insidious care his known abode ;  
 There fast in chains constrain the various god :  
 Who bound, obedient to superiour force,  
 Unerring will prescribe your destin'd course. 525  
 If studious of your realms, you then demand  
 Their state, since last you left your natal land ;  
 Instant the god obsequious will disclose  
 Bright tracks of glory, or a cloud of woes. 530

She ceas'd, and suppliant thus I made reply ;  
 O goddess ! on thy aid my hopes rely :  
 Dictate propitious to my duteous ear,  
 What arts can captivate the changeful seer ?  
 For perilous th' assay, unheard the toil, 535  
 T' elude the prescience of a god by guile.

Thus to the goddess mild my suit I end.  
 Then she. Obedient to my rule, attend :  
 When thro' the zone of heav'n the mounted sun  
 Hath journey'd half, and half remains to run ; 540  
 The seer, while zephyrs curl the swelling deep,  
 Basks on the breezy shore, in grateful sleep,  
 His oozy limbs. Emerging from the wave,  
 The Phocæ swift surround his rocky cave,  
 Frequent and full ; the consecrated train 545  
 Of \* her, whose azure trident awes the main :  
 There wallowing warm, th' enormous herd exhales  
 An oily steam, and taints the noon-tide gales.

king named Proteus, who reigned in Memphis ; that Ægypt was always remarkable for those who excelled in magical arts ; thus Jannes and Jambres changed, at least in appearance, a rod into a serpent, and water into blood : it is not therefore improbable but that Menelaus, hearing of him while he was in Ægypt, went to consult him as an enchanter, which kind of men always pretended to foreknow events : this perhaps was the real foundation of the whole story concerning Proteus ; the rest is the fiction and embellishment of the poet, who ascribes to his Proteus whatever the credulity of men usually ascribes to enchanters.



To that recess, commodious for surprise,  
 When purple light shall next suffuse the skies, 550  
 With me repair; and from thy warrior band  
 Three chosen chiefs of dauntless soul command:  
 Let their auxiliar force befriend the toil,  
 For strong the god, and perfected in guile.  
 Stretch'd on the shelly shore, he first surveys 555  
 The flouncing herd ascending from the seas;  
 Their number summ'd, repos'd in sleep profound  
 The scaly charge their guardian god surround:  
 So with his batt'ning flocks the careful swain  
 Abides, pavilion'd on the grassy plain. 560  
 With pow'rs united, obstinately bold  
 Invade him, couch'd amid the scaly fold:  
 Instant he wears, elusive of the rape,  
 The mimic force of ev'ry savage shape:  
 Or glides with liquid lapse a murm'ring stream, 565  
 Or wrapt in flame, he glows at ev'ry limb.  
 Yet still retentive, with redoubled might  
 Thro' each vain passive form constrain his flight.  
 But when, his native shape resum'd, he stands  
 Patient of conquest, and your cause demands; 570  
 The cause that urg'd the bold attempt declare,  
 And soothe the vanquish'd with a victor's pray'r.  
 The bands relax'd, implore the seer to say  
 What godhead interdicts the wat'ry way?  
 Who straight propitious, in prophetic strain 575  
 Will teach you to repass th' unmeasur'd main.  
 She ceas'd, and bounding from the shelly shore,  
 Round the descending nymph the waves redounding  
 roar.

High wrapt in wonder of the future deed,  
 With joy impetuous, to the port I speed: 580

v. 569. *But when, his native shape resum'd, &c.* ] This is founded upon the practice of enchanters, who never give their answers, till they have astonished the imagination of those who consult them with their juggling delusions. Dacier.



The wants of nature with repast suffice,  
 'Till night with grateful shade involv'd the skies,  
 And shed ambrosial dews. Fast by the deep,  
 Along the tented shore, in balmy sleep,  
 Our cares were lost. When o'er the eastern lawn, 585  
 In saffron robes the daughter of the dawn  
 Advanc'd her rosy steps ; before the bay,  
 Due ritual honours to the gods I pay ;  
 Then seek the place the sea-born nymph assign'd,  
 With three associates of undaunted mind. 590  
 Arriv'd, to form along th' appointed strand  
 For each a bed, she scoops the hilly sand :  
 Then from her azure car, the finny spoils  
 Of four vast Phocæ takes, to veil her wiles :  
 Beneath the finny spoils extended prone, 595  
 Hard toil ! the prophet's piercing eye to shun ;  
 New from the corse, the scaly frauds diffuse  
 Unfavoury stench of oil, and brackish ooze :  
 But the bright sea-maid's gentle pow'r implor'd,  
 With nectar'd drops the sick'ning sense restor'd. 600

Thus 'till the sun had travell'd half the skies,  
 Ambush'd we lie, and wait the bold emprise :  
 When thronging quick to bask in open air,  
 The flocks of ocean to the strand repair :  
 Couch'd on the sunny sand, the monsters sleep : 605  
 Then Proteus mounting from the hoary deep,  
 Surveys his charge, unknowing of deceit :  
 (In order told, we make the sum compleat.)  
 Pleas'd with the false review, secure he lies,  
 And leaden slumbers press his drooping eyes. 610  
 Rushing impetuous forth, we straight prepare  
 A furious onset with the sound of war,  
 And shouting seize the god : our force t' evade  
 His various arts he soon resumes in aid :

v. 613. *And shouting seize the god : —*] Proteus has, through the whole story, been described as a god who knew all things ; it



A lion now, he curls a furgy mane; 615  
 Sudden, our bands a spotted pard restrain;  
 Then arm'd with tusks, and light'ning in his eyes,  
 A boar's obscener shape the god belies:  
 On spiry volumes, there, a dragon rides;  
 Here, from our strict embrace a stream he glides: 620  
 And last, sublime his stately growth he rears,  
 A tree, and well-dissembled foliage wears.  
 Vain efforts! with superiour pow'r compress'd,  
 Me with reluctance thus the seer address'd.  
 Say, son of Atreus, say what god inspir'd 625  
 This daring fraud, and what the boon desir'd?  
 I thus; O thou, whose certain eye foresees  
 The fix'd event of fate's remote decrees;  
 After long woes, and various toil endur'd,  
 Still on this desert isle my fleet is moor'd; 630  
 Unfriended of the gales. All-knowing! say,  
 What godhead interdicts the wat'ry way?  
 What vows repentant will the pow'r appease,  
 To speed a prosp'rous voyage o'er the seas?  
 To Jove (with stern regard the god replies) 635  
 And all th' offended synod of the skies,

may then be asked, how comes it that he did not foreknow the violence that was designed against his own person? and is it not a contradiction, that he who knew Menelaus without information, should not know that he lay in ambush to seize him? The only answer that occurs to me is, that these enchanters never pretend to have an inherent fore-knowledge of events, but learn things by magical arts, and by recourse to the secrets of their profession; so that Proteus having no suspicion, had not consulted his art, and consequently might be surpris'd by Menelaus: so far is agreeable to the pretensions of such deluders: the poet indeed has drawn him in colours stronger than life; but poetry adds or detracts at pleasure, and is allowed frequently to step out of the way, to bring a foreign ornament into the story.

v 635. *To Jove ——— Just becatombs ——— &c.]* Homer continually inculcates morality, and piety to the gods; he gives in this place a great instance of the necessity of it. Menelaus cannot succeed in any of his actions, till he pays due honours to the gods; the neglect of sacrifice is the occasion of all his calamity, and the performance of it opens a way to all his future prosperity.



Just hecatombs with due devotion slain,  
 Thy guilt absolv'd, a prosp'rous voyage gain.  
 To the firm sanction of thy fate attend !  
 An exile thou, nor cheering face of friend, 640  
 Nor sight of natal shore, nor regal dome  
 Shalt yet enjoy, but still art doom'd to roam.  
 Once more the Nile, who from the secret source  
 Of Jove's high seat descends with sweepy force,  
 Must view his billows white beneath thy oar, 645  
 And altars blaze along his sanguine shore.  
 Then will the gods, with holy pomp ador'd,  
 To thy long vows a safe return accord.

He ceas'd : heart-wounded with afflictive pain,  
 (Doom'd to repeat the perils of the main, 650  
 A shelfy tract, and long !) O seer, I cry,  
 To the stern sanction of th' offended sky  
 My prompt obedience bows. But deign to say,  
 What fate propitious, or what dire dismay  
 Sustain those peers, the reliques of our host, 655  
 Whom I with Nestor on the Phrygian coast  
 Embracing left ? Must I the warriors weep,  
 Whelm'd in the bottom of the monstrous deep ?  
 Or did the kind domestic friend deplore  
 The breathless heroes on their native shore ? 660

v. 643. — — — *Nile, who from the secret source  
 Of Jove's high seat descends ———*]

Homer, it must be confessed, gives the epithet *Διίπετῆς* generally to all rivers ; if he had used it here peculiarly, there might have been room to have imagined that he had been acquainted with the true cause of the inundations of this famous river : the word *Διίπετῆς* implies it : for it is now generally agreed, that these prodigious inundations proceed from the vast rains and the melting of the snows on the mountains of the moon in *Æthiopia*, about the autumnal æquinox ; when those rains begin to fall, the river by degrees increases, and as they abate, it decreases ; the word *Διίπετῆς* is therefore peculiarly proper when applied to the Nile ; for though all rivers depend upon the waters that fall from the air, or *ἐκ Διὸς*, yet the Nile more especially ; for when the rain ceases, the Nile consists only of seven empty channels.



Press not too far, reply'd the god ; but cease  
 To know, what known will violate thy peace :  
 Too curious of their doom ! with friendly woe  
 Thy breast will heave, and tears eternal flow.  
 Part live ! the rest, a lamentable train ! 665  
 Range the dark bounds of Pluto's dreary reign.  
 Two, foremost in the roll of Mars renown'd,  
 Whose arms with conquest in thy cause were crown'd,  
 Fell by disastrous fate ; by tempests tost,  
 A third lives wretched on a distant coast. 670

By Neptune rescu'd from Minerva's hate,  
 On Gyræ, safe Oïlean Ajax sat,  
 His ship o'erwhelm'd ; but frowning on the floods,  
 Impious he roar'd defiance to the gods ;  
 To his own prowess all the glory gave, 675  
 The pow'r defrauding who vouchsaf'd to save.  
 This heard the raging ruler of the main ;  
 His spear, indignant for such high disdain,  
 He lanch'd ; dividing with his forky mace  
 Th' aerial summit from the marble base : 680  
 The rock rush'd sea-ward with impetuous roar  
 Ingulf'd, and to th' abyss the boaster bore.

v. 682. — — *and to th' abyss the boaster bore.*] It is in the original, “He died, having drunk the salt water.” This verse has been omitted in many editions of Homer ; and the ancients, says Eustathius, blame Aristarchus for not marking it as a verse that ought to be rejected ; the simplicity of it consists in the sense, more than in the terms, and it is unworthy of Proteus to treat the death of Ajax with pleasantries, as he seems to do, by adding “having drunk salt water :” but why may not Proteus be supposed to be serious, and the term Ἀλμυρὸν ἔδωκε, to imply no more than that he was drowned in the waves of the ocean ? I know only one reason that can give any colour to the objection, viz. its being possibly become a vulgar expression, and used commonly in a ludicrous sense ; then indeed it is to be avoided in poetry, but it does not follow, because perhaps it might be used in this manner in the days of these critics, that therefore it was so used in the days of Homer. What was poetical in the time of the poet, might be grown vulgar in the time of the critics.



By Juno's guardian aid, the wat'ry vast  
Secure of storms, your royal brother past :  
'Till coasting nigh the cape, where Malea shrouds  
Her spiry cliffs amid surrounding clouds ; 686  
A whirling gust tumultuous from the shore,  
Across the deep his lab'ring vessel bore.  
In an ill-fated hour the coast he gain'd,  
Where late in regal pomp Thyestes reign'd ; 690  
But when his hoary honours bow'd to fate,  
Ægythus govern'd in paternal state.  
The surges now subside, the tempest ends ;  
From his tall ship the king of men descends :  
There fondly thinks the gods conclude his toil ! 695  
Far from his own domain salutes the foil :  
With rapture oft' the verge of Greece reviews,  
And the dear turf with tears of joy bedews.  
Him thus exulting on the distant strand,  
A spy distinguish'd from his airy stand ; 700  
To bribe whose vigilance, Ægythus told  
A mighty sum of ill persuading gold :  
There watch'd this guardian of his guilty fear,  
'Till the twelfth moon had wheel'd her pale career ;  
And now admonish'd by his eye, to court 705  
With terror wing'd conveys the dread report.  
Of deathful arts expert, his lord employs  
The ministers of blood in dark surprise :  
And twenty youths in radiant mail incas'd,  
Close ambush'd nigh the spacious hall he plac'd. 710  
Then bids prepare the hospitable treat :  
Vain shews of love to veil his felon-hate !  
To grace the victor's welcome from the wars,  
A train of coursers, and triumphal cars  
Magnificent he leads : the royal guest 715  
Thoughtless of ill, accepts the fraudulent feast,  
The troop forth issuing from the dark recess,  
With homicidal rage the king oppresses !



So, whilst he feeds luxurious in the stall,  
 The sov'reign of the herd is doom'd to fall. 720  
 The partners of his fame and toils at Troy,  
 Around their lord, a mighty ruin ! lie :  
 Mix'd with the brave, the base invaders bleed ;  
 Ægyfthus sole survives to boast the deed.

He said ; chill horrors shook my shiv'ring soul, 725  
 Rack'd with convulsive pangs in dust I roll ;  
 And hate, in madness of extreme despair,  
 To view the sun, or breathe the vital air.  
 But when superiour to the rage of woe,  
 I stood restor'd, and tears had ceas'd to flow ; 730  
 Lenient of grief, the pitying god began —  
 Forget the brother, and resume the man :  
 To fate's supreme dispose the dead resign,  
 That care be fate's, a speedy passage thine.  
 Still lives the wretch who wrought the death deplor'd,  
 But lives a victim for thy vengeful sword ; 736  
 Unless with filial rage Orestes glow,  
 And swift prevent the meditated blow :  
 You timely will return a welcome guest,  
 With him to share the sad funereal feast. 740

He said : new thoughts my beating heart employ,  
 My gloomy soul receives a gleam of joy.  
 Fair hope revives ; and eager I address  
 The prescient godhead to reveal the rest.  
 The doom decreed of those disastrous two 745  
 I've heard with pain, but oh ! the tale pursue ;  
 What third brave son of Mars the fates constrain  
 To roam the howling desert of the main :

v. 719. *So, whilst he feeds luxurious in the stall, &c.]* Dacier translates βῆν, by “taureau,” a bull ; and misunderstands Eustathius, who directly says, that in the second Iliad the poet compares Agamemnon to a bull, in this place to an ox, ταύρω εἰκασεν νῦν δὲ βοτὶ αὐτὸν ὠμοίωσεν. The one was undoubtedly designed to describe the courage and majestic port of a warrior, the other to give us an image of a prince falling in full peace and plenty, ὡς βῆν ἐπὶ φάτῃ.



Or in eternal shade if cold he lies,  
Provoke new sorrow from these grateful eyes. 750

v. 749. *Or in eternal shade if cold he lies.*] Proteus in the beginning of his relation had said, that "one person was alive, and remained enclosed by the ocean:" how then comes Menelaus here to say, Give me an account of that other person who is alive, or dead? Perhaps the sorrow which Menelaus conceived for his friend Ulysses, might make him fear the worst; and Proteus adding, "enclosed by the ocean," might give a suspicion that he was dead, the words being capable of ambiguity. However this be, it sets the friendship of Menelaus in a strong light: where friendship is sincere, a state of uncertainty is a state of fears, we dread even possibilities, and give them an imaginary certainty. Upon this, one of the finest compliments that a poet ever made to a patron turns, that of Horace to Mæcenas, in the first of the Epodes.

It may not perhaps be disagreeable to the reader to observe, that Virgil has borrowed this story of Proteus from Homer, and translated it almost literally. Rapin says, that Homer's description is more ingenious and fuller of invention, but Virgil's more judicious. I wish that critic had given his reasons for his opinion. I believe in general, the plan of the Iliad and Odyssey is allowed by the best of critics to be more perfect than that of the Æneis. Homer, with respect to the unity of time, has the advantage very manifestly: Rapin confesses it, and Aristotle proposes him as an example to all epic authors. Where then is the superiority of judgment? Is it that there are more fabulous, I mean incredible, stories in Homer than Virgil? as that of the Cyclops, the ships of Alcinous, &c. Virgil has imitated most of these bold fables, and the story of the ships of Alcinous is not more incredible than the transformation of the ships of Æneas. But this is too large a subject to be discussed in the compass of these annotations. In particular passages I freely allow the preference to Virgil, as in the descent of Æneas into hell, &c. but in this story of Proteus, I cannot see any superiority of judgment. Virgil is little more than a translator; to shew the particulars would be too tedious: I refer it to the reader to compare the two authors, and shall only instance in one passage.

Ἡμεῖς δ' αἰψ' ἑάχοντες ἐπεσσύμεθ', ἀμφὶ δὲ χεῖρας  
βάλλομεν· ἐδ' ὁ γέρων δολίης ἐπελήθετο τέχνης,  
Ἄλλ' ἦτοι πρῶτις αὖ λέων γένετ' ἠϋγένης,  
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα δράκων, καὶ πάρδαλις, ἠδὲ μέγας σῦς,  
Γίγετο δ' ὑγρὸν ὕδαρ, καὶ δένδρεον ὑψιπέτηλον, &c.

"Cum clamore ruit magno, manicisque jacentem

"Occupat: ille suæ contra non immemor artis,

"Omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum,

"Ignemque, horribilemque feram, fluviumque liquentem, &c."

Homer has a manifest advantage in the occasion of the story: the loss of a few bees seems to be a cause too trivial for an undertaking



That chief (rejoin'd the god) his race derives  
 From Ithaca, and wond'rous woes survives ;  
 Laertes' son : girt with circumfluous tides,  
 He still calamitous constraint abides.  
 Him in Calypso's cave of late I view'd, 755  
 When streaming grief his faded cheek bedew'd.  
 But vain his pray'r, his arts are vain to move  
 Th' enamour'd goddess, or elude her love :  
 His vessel sunk, and dear companions lost,  
 He lives reluctant on a foreign coast. 760  
 But oh belov'd by heav'n ! reserv'd to thee  
 A happier lot the smiling fates decree :  
 Free from that law, beneath whose mortal sway  
 Matter is chang'd, and varying forms decay ;  
 Elysium shall be thine ; the blissful plains 765  
 Of utmost earth, where Rhadamanthus reigns.  
 Joys ever young, unmix'd with pain or fear,  
 Fill the wide circle of th' eternal year :

so great as the surprise of a deity : whereas the whole happiness of Menelaus depends upon this consultation of Proteus : this is a far more important cause, and consequently in this respect something more is due to Homer than the sole honour of an inventor.

v. 765. *Elysium shall be thine ; the blissful plains  
 Of utmost earth, &c.]*

This is the only place in which the Elysian field is mentioned in Homer. The conjectures of the ancients are very various about it : Plato in his Phæd. places it in "cælo stellato," or the region of the stars ; but since Homer fixes it εἰς πείρατα γαίης, or (as Milton expresses it) at the "earth's green end," I will pass over the conjectures of others, especially since the *μανάων Νήσοι*, by which others express Elysium, confine it to this world.

Strabo, says Eustathius, places it not far from Maurusia, that lies near the streights : it is supposed by Bochart, as Dacier observes, that the fable is of Phœnician extraction, that Alizuth in Hebrew signifies joy or exultation, which word the Greeks, adapting to their way of pronunciation, called Elysus. If this be true, I should come into an opinion that has much prevailed, that the Greeks had heard of Paradise from the Hebrews ; and that the Hebrews describing Paradise as a place of Alizuth, or joy, gave occasion to all the fables of the Grecian Elysium.



Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime :  
The fields are florid with unfading prime : 770  
From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,  
Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy snow ;  
But from the breezy deep the blest inhale  
The fragrant murmurs of the western gale.  
This grace peculiar will the gods afford 775  
To thee the son of Jove, and beauteous Helen's lord.

He ceas'd, and plunging in the vast profound,  
Beneath the god the whirling billows bound.  
Then speeding back, involv'd in various thought,  
My friends attending at the shore I fought. 780  
Arriv'd, the rage of hunger we controul,  
'Till night with silent shade invests the pole ;  
Then lose the cares of life in pleasing rest. —

Soon as the morn reveals the roseate east,  
With sails we wing the masts, our anchors weigh, 785  
Unmoor the fleet, and rush into the sea.

Rang'd on the banks, beneath our equal oars  
White curl the waves, and the vex'd ocean roars.  
Then steering backward from the Pharian isle,  
We gain the stream of Jove-descended Nile : 790  
There quit the ships, and on the destin'd shore  
With ritual hecatombs the gods adore :  
Their wrath aton'd, to Agamemnon's name  
A cenotaph I raise of deathless fame.

These rites to piety and grief discharg'd, 795  
The friendly gods a springing gale enlarg'd :  
The fleet swift tilting o'er the surges flew,  
'Till Grecian cliffs appear'd, a blissful view !

Thy patient ear hath heard me long relate  
A story, fruitful of disastrous fate : 800  
And now, young prince, indulge my fond request ;  
Be Sparta honour'd with his royal guest,  
'Till from his eastern goal, the joyous fun  
His twelfth diurnal race begins to run.



Meantime my train the friendly gifts prepare, 805  
 Three sprightly courfers, and a polish'd car :  
 With these, a goblet of capacious mould,  
 Figur'd with art to dignify the gold,  
 (Form'd for libation to the gods) shall prove  
 A pledge and monument of sacred love. 810

My quick return, young Ithacus rejoin'd,  
 Damps the warm wishes of my raptur'd mind :  
 Did not my fate my needful haste constrain,  
 Charm'd by your speech, so graceful and humane,  
 Lost in delight the circling year would roll, 815  
 While deep attention fix'd my list'ning soul.  
 But now to Pyle permit my destin'd way,  
 My lov'd associates chide my long delay :  
 In dear remembrance of your royal grace,  
 I take the present of the promis'd vase ; 820  
 The courfers for the champaign sports, retain ;  
 That gift our barren rocks will render vain :

v. 806. *Three sprightly courfers.*] How comes it to pass that Menelaus proffers three horses to Telemachus? This was a compleat set among the ancients, they used one pole-horse and two leaders. Eustathius.

v. 822. *That gift our barren rocks will render vain.*] This passage where Telemachus refuses the horses has been much observed, and turned to a moral sense, viz. as a lesson to men to desire nothing but what is suitable to their conditions. Horace has introduced it into his epistles,

“ Haud malè Telemachus, proles patientis Ulyssæi ;  
 “ Non est aptus equis Ithacæ locus, ut neque planis  
 “ Porrectus spaciis, nec multæ prodigus herbæ :  
 “ Atride, magis apta tibi tua dona relinquam.”

This is the reason why Ulysses (as Eustathius observes upon the tenth of the Iliad) leaves the horses of Rhesus to the disposal of Diomedes ; so that the same spirit of wisdom reigned in Telemachus, that was so remarkable in Ulysses. This is the reason why Menelaus smiled ; it was not at the frankness or simplicity of Telemachus, but it was a smile of joy, to see the young prince inherit his father's wisdom.

It is the remark of Eustathius, that Telemachus is far from exalting the nature of his country ; he confesses it to be barren, and



Horrid with cliffs, our meagre land allows  
 Thin herbage for the mountain goat to browse,  
 But neither mead nor plain supplies, to feed 825  
 The sprightly courser, or indulge his speed :  
 To sea-surrounded realms the gods assign  
 Small tract or fertile lawn, the least to mine.

His hand the king with tender passion prefs'd,  
 And smiling thus, the royal youth address'd : 830  
 O early worth ! a soul so wise, and young,  
 Proclaims you from the sage Ulysses sprung.  
 Selected from my stores, of matchless price  
 An urn shall recompence your prudent choice :  
 Not mean the massy mould of silver, grac'd 835  
 By Vulcan's art, the verge with gold enchas'd ;  
 A pledge the scepter'd pow'r of Sidon gave,  
 When to his realm I plough'd the orient wave.

Thus they alternate ; while with artful care  
 The menial train the regal feast prepare : 840

more barren than the neighbouring islands ; yet that natural and laudable affection which all worthy persons have for their country, makes him prefer it to places of a more happy situation. This appears to me a replication to what Menelaus had before offered concerning the transplantation of Ulysses to Sparta ; this is contained in *ἰνπρόβότοιο* ; and then the meaning is, It is true Ithaca is a barren region, yet more desirable than this country of Lacedæmon, this *ἰνπρόβότοιο γαῖα*. It is the more probable from the offer of horses which Menelaus had then made, and is also another reason for the smile of Menelaus.

Eustathius remarks that Menelaus, though he has expressed the greatest friendship for Ulysses, yet makes no offer to restore the fortunes of his friend by any military assistance ; though he had a most fair opportunity given him to repay the past kindness of Ulysses to his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus ; and how comes Telemachus not to ask it either of Nestor or Menelaus ? He answers, that this depended upon the uncertainty they were yet under, concerning the life of Ulysses. But the true reason in my opinion is, that the nature of epic poetry requires a contrary conduct : the hero of the poem is to be the chief agent, and the re-establishment of his fortunes must be owing to his own wisdom and valour. I have enlarged upon this already, so that there is no occasion in this place to insist upon it.



The firstlings of the flock are doom'd to dye ;  
 Rich fragrant wines the chearing bowl supply ;  
 A female band the gift of Ceres bring ;  
 And the gilt roofs with genial triumph ring.

Meanwhile, in Ithaca, the suitor-pow'rs 845  
 In active games divide their jovial hours :

In areas vary'd with mosaic art,  
 Some whirl the disk, and some the jav'lin dart.

Aside, sequester'd from the vast resort,  
 Antinous fat spectator of the sport ; 850

With great Eurymachus, of worth confest,  
 And high descent, superiour to the rest ;  
 Whom young Noëmon lowly thus addrest. }

My ship equipp'd within the neighb'ring port,  
 The prince, departing for the Pylian court, 855

Requested for his speed ; but courteous, say  
 When steers he home, or why this long delay ?

For Elis I should sail with utmost speed,  
 T' import twelve mares which there luxurious feed,  
 And twelve young mules, a strong laborious race, 860  
 New to the plough, unpractis'd in the trace.

Unknowing of the course to Pyle design'd,  
 A sudden horror seiz'd on either mind :

The prince in rural bow'r they fondly thought,  
 Numb'ring his flocks and herds, not far remote. 865

Relate, Antinous cries, devoid of guile,  
 When spread the prince his sail for distant Pyle ?

Did chosen chiefs across the gulfy main  
 Attend his voyage, or domestic train ?

Spontaneous did you speed his secret course, 870  
 Or was the vessel seiz'd by fraud or force ?

With willing duty, not reluctant mind,  
 (Noëmon cry'd) the vessel was resign'd.

Who in the balance, with the great affairs  
 Of courts presume to weigh their private cares ? 875



With him, the peerage next in pow'r to you :  
 And Mentor, captain of the lordly crew,  
 Or some celestial in his rev'rend form,  
 Safe from the secret rock and adverse storm,  
 Pilots the course : for when the glimm'ring ray 880  
 Of yester dawn disclos'd the tender day,  
 Mentor himself I saw, and much admir'd. —  
 Then ceas'd the youth, and from the court retir'd.

Confounded and appall'd, th' unfinish'd game  
 The suitors quit, and all to council came : 885  
 Antinous first th' assembled peers addrest,  
 Rage sparkling in his eyes, and burning in his breast,  
 O shame to manhood ! shall one daring boy  
 The scheme of all our happiness destroy ?  
 Fly unperceiv'd, seducing half the flow'r 890  
 Of nobles, and invite a foreign pow'r ?  
 The pond'rous engine rais'd to crush us all,  
 Recoiling, on his head is sure to fall.  
 Instant prepare me, on the neighb'ring strand,  
 With twenty chosen mates a vessel mann'd ; 895  
 For ambush'd close beneath the Samian shore  
 His ship returning shall my spies explore :

v. 896. *For ambush'd close, &c* ] We have here another use which the poet makes of the voyage of Telemachus. Eustathius remarks that these incidents not only diversify but enliven the poem. But it may be asked why the poet makes not use of so fair an opportunity to insert a gallant action of Telemachus, and draw him not as eluding, but defeating his adversaries ? The answer is easy ; That the suitors sailed compleatly armed, and Telemachus unprovided of any weapons : and therefore Homer consults credibility, and forbears to paint his young hero in the colours of a knight in romance, who upon all disadvantages engages and defeats his opposers. But then to what purpose is this ambush of the suitors, and what part of the design of the poem is carried on by it ? The very chief aim of it ; To shew the sufferings of Ulysses : he is unfortunate in all relations of life, as a king, as an husband, and here very eminently as a father ; these sufferings are laid down in the proposition of the Odyssey as essential to the poem, and consequently this ambush laid by the suitors against the life of Telemachus is an essential ornament.



He soon his rashness shall with life atone,  
Seek for his father's fate, but find his own.

With vast applause the sentence all approve ; 900  
Then rise, and to the feastful hall remove :  
Swift to the queen the herald Medon ran,  
Who heard the consult of the dire divan :  
Before her dome the royal matron stands,  
And thus the message of his haste demands. 905

What will the suitors ? must my servant train  
Th' allotted labours of the day refrain,  
For them to form some exquisite repast ?  
Heav'n grant this festival may prove their last !  
Or if they still must live, from me remove 910  
The double plague of luxury and love !  
Forbear, ye sons of insolence ! forbear,  
In riot to consume a wretched heir.  
In the young soul illustrious thought to raise,  
Were ye not tutor'd with Ulysses' praise ? 915

v. 906. *The speech of Penelope.*] Longinus in particular commends this speech as a true picture of a person that feels various emotions of soul, and is borne by every gust of passion from sentiment to sentiment, with sudden and unexpected transitions. There is some obscurity in the Greek ; this arises from the warmth with which she speaks, she has not leisure to explain herself fully, a circumstance natural to a person in anger.

Penelope gives a very beautiful picture of Ulysses : “ The best  
“ of Princes are allowed to have their favourites, and give a greater  
“ share of affection than ordinary to particular persons. But Ulysses  
“ was a father to all his people alike, and loved them all as  
“ his children ; a father, though he bears a more tender affection  
“ to one child than to another, yet shews them all an equal treatment ;  
“ thus also a good king is not swayed by inclination, but  
“ justice, towards all his subjects.” Dacier.

One circumstance is very remarkable, and gives us a full view of a person in anger ; at the very sight of Medon, Penelope flies out into passion ; she gives him not time to speak one syllable, but speaks herself as if all the suitors were present, and reproaches them in the person of Medon, though Medon is just to her and Ulysses ; but anger is an undistinguishing passion. What she says of ingratitude, recalls to my memory what is to be found in Laertius : Aristotle being asked what thing upon earth soonest grew old ? replied “ an obligation.” *Τὸ τάχιστα γηράσκει ;* respondit, *χάρις.*



Have not your fathers oft' my lord defin'd,  
Gentle of speech, beneficent of mind ?

Some kings with arbitrary rage devour,  
Or in their tyrant-minions vest the pow'r :

Ulysses let no partial favours fall, 920

The people's parent, he protected all :

But absent now, perfidious and ingrate !

His stores ye ravage, and usurp his state.

He thus ; O were the woes you speak the worst !

They form a deed more odious and accurst ; 925

More dreadful than your boding soul divines :

But pitying Jove avert the dire designs !

The darling object of your royal care

Is mark'd to perish in a deathful snare ;

Before he anchors in his native port, 930

From Pyle re-failing and the Spartan court ;

Horrid to speak ! in ambush is decreed

The hope and heir of Ithaca to bleed !

Sudden she sunk beneath the weighty woes,

The vital streams a chilling horror froze : 935

The big round tear stands trembling in her eye,

And on her tongue imperfect accents dye.

At length, in tender language, interwove

With sighs, she thus express'd her anxious love.

Why rashly wou'd my son his fate explore, 940

Ride the wild waves, and quit the safer shore ?

Did he with all the greatly wretched, crave

A blank oblivion, and untimely grave !

v. 941. *Ride the wild waves* —] Were this passage to be rendered literally, it would run thus, " climb the swift ships, " which are horses to men on the seas." Eustathius observes the allusion is very just, and that the only doubt is, whether it be brought in opportunely by Penelope ? It may be doubted, if the mind could find leisure to introduce such allusions ? Dacier answers that Penelope speaks thus through indignation : the grief that she conceives at the hardness of men, in finding out a way to pass the seas as well as land, furnished her with these figures very naturally ; for figures are agreeable to passion.



'Tis not, reply'd the sage, to Medon giv'n  
To know, if some inhabitant of heav'n, 945  
In his young breast the daring thought inspir'd;  
Or if alone with filial duty fir'd,  
The winds and waves he tempts in early bloom,  
Studious to learn his absent father's doom.

The sage retir'd: unable to controul 950  
The mighty griefs that swell her lab'ring soul,  
Rolling convulsive on the floor, is seen  
The piteous object of a prostrate queen.  
Words to her dumb complaint a pause supplies,  
And breath, to waste in unavailing cries. 955  
Around their sov'reign wept the menial fair,  
To whom she thus address'd her deep despair.

Behold a wretch whom all the gods consign  
To woe! Did ever sorrows equal mine?  
Long to my joys my dearest lord is lost, 960  
His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast:  
Now from my fond embrace, by tempests torn,  
Our other column of the state is borne:  
Nor took a kind adieu: nor sought consent! —  
Unkind confed'rates in his dire intent! 965  
Ill suits it with your shews of duteous zeal,  
From me the purpos'd voyage to conceal:  
Tho' at the solemn midnight hour he rose,  
Why did you fear to trouble my repose?  
He either had obey'd my fond desire, 970  
Or seen his mother pierc'd with grief expire.  
Bid Dolius quick attend, the faithful slave  
Whom to my nuptial train Icarius gave,  
T' attend the fruit-groves: with incessant speed  
He shall this violence of death decreed, 975  
To good Laertes tell. Experienc'd age  
May timely intercept the ruffian-rage,  
Convene the tribes, the murd'rous plot reveal,  
And to their pow'r to save his race appeal.



Then Euryclea thus. My dearest dread ! 980  
 Tho' to the sword I bow this hoary head,  
 Or if a dungeon be the pain decreed,  
 I own me conscious of th' unpleasing deed :  
 Auxiliar to his flight, my aid implor'd,  
 With wine and viands I the vessel stor'd : 985  
 A solemn oath, impos'd, the secret seal'd,  
 'Till the twelfth dawn the light of heav'n reveal'd.  
 Dreading th' effect of a fond mother's fear,  
 He dar'd not violate your royal ear.  
 But bathe, and in imperial robes array'd, 990  
 Pay due devotions to the \* martial maid,  
 And rest affianc'd in her guardian aid.  
 Send not to good Laertes, nor engage  
 In toils of state the miseries of age :  
 'Tis impious to surmise, the pow'rs divine 995  
 To ruin doom the Jove-descended line :  
 Long shall the race of just Arcegius reign,  
 And isles remote enlarge his old domain.

\* Minerva.

v, 998. *And isles remote enlarge his old domain.*] Dacier offers a criticism upon these last words of Euryclea: it cannot be imagined these fertile fields can be spoken of Ithaca; Plutarch's description of it is intirely contradictory to this: "Ithaca, says he, is rough  
 " and mountainous, fit only to breed goats; upon cultivation it  
 " scarce yields any fruits, and these so worthless, as scarce to re-  
 " compensate the labour of gathering." Homer therefore by this expression intended the other dominions of Ulysses, such as Cephalenia, &c.

But I question not, that the whole dominions of Ulysses are included, Ithaca as well as Cephalenia; for though Ithaca was mountainous, yet the vallies were fruitful, according to the description of it in the thirteenth of the Odyssey.

The rugged soil allows no level space  
 For flying chariots, or the rapid race;  
 Yet not ungrateful to the peasant's pain,  
 Suffices fulness to the swelling grain:  
 The loaded trees their various fruits produce,  
 And clust'ring grapes afford a gen'rous juice, &c.



The queen her speech with calm attention hears,  
 Her eyes restrain the silver-streaming tears : 1000  
 She bathes, and rob'd, the sacred dome ascends :  
 Her pious speed a female train attends :  
 The salted cakes in canisters are laid,  
 And thus the queen invokes Minerva's aid.

Daughter divine of Jove, whose arm can wield 1005  
 Th' avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield !  
 If e'er Ulysses to thy fane preferr'd  
 The best and choicest of his flock and herd ;  
 Hear, goddess, hear, by those oblations won ;  
 And for the pious fire preserve the son : 1010  
 His wish'd return with happy pow'r befriend,  
 And on the suitors let thy wrath descend.

She ceas'd ; shrill extasies of joy declare  
 The fav'ring goddess present to the pray'r :  
 The suitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice 1015  
 A signal of her hymenæal choice :

As for her remark upon ἀπόπροθι, it is of no validity ; the word stands in opposition to Δώματα, and implies no more than here, or at a distance in general.

v. 1015. *The suitors heard, and deem'd the mirthful voice  
 A signal of her bymenæal choice.*

It may be asked whence this conjecture of the suitors arises ? Penelope is described as weeping grievously, and fainting away, and yet immediately the suitors conclude she is preparing for the nuptials. Eustathius answers, that undoubtedly the suitors understood the queen had purified herself with water, and supplicated the goddess Minerva, though the poet omits the relation of such little particularities. But whence is it that the poet gives a greater share of wisdom to Euryclea than to Penelope ? Penelope commands a servant to fly with the news of the absence of Telemachus to Laertes, which could not at all advantage Telemachus, and only grieve Laertes : Euryclea immediately diverts her from that vain intention, advises her to have recourse to heaven, and not add misery to the already miserable Laertes : this is wisdom in Euryclea. But it must be confessed that the other is nature in Penelope : Euryclea is calm, Penelope in a passion : and Homer would have been a very bad painter of human nature, if he had drawn Penelope, thus heated with passion, in the mild temper of Euryclea ; grief and resentment give Penelope no time to deliberate, whereas Euryclea is less concerned, and consequently capable of thinking with more tranquillity.



Whilst one most jovial thus accosts the board ;  
 " Too late the queen selects a second lord :  
 " In evil hour the nuptial rite intends,  
 " When o'er her son disastrous death impends." 1020  
 Thus he unskill'd of what the fates provide !  
 But with severe rebuke Antinous cry'd.

These empty vaunts will make the voyage vain ;  
 Alarm not with discourse the menial train :  
 The great event with silent hope attend ; 1025  
 Our deeds alone our counsel must commend.

His speech thus ended short, he frowning rose,  
 And twenty chiefs renown'd for valour chose :  
 Down to the strand he speeds with haughty strides,  
 Where anchor'd in the bay the vessel rides, 1030  
 Replete with mail and military store,  
 In all her tackle trim to quit the shore.  
 The desp'rate crew ascend, unfurl the sails ;  
 (The sea-ward prow invites the tardy gales)  
 Then take repast, 'till Hesperus display'd 1035  
 His golden circlet in the western shade.

Meantime the queen without refection due,  
 Heart-wounded, to the bed of state withdrew :  
 In her sad breast the prince's fortunes roll,  
 And hope and doubt alternate seize her soul. 1040  
 So when the wood-man's toil her cave furrounds,  
 And with the hunter's cry the grove resounds ;

v. 1022. *With rebuke severe Antinous cry'd.*] Antinous speaks thus in return to what had been before said by one of the suitors concerning Telemachus, viz. " the queen little imagines that her son's death approaches ;" he fears lest Penelope should know their intentions, and hinder their measures by raising the subjects of Ithaca that still retained their fidelity. Dacier.

v. 1041. *So when the woodman's toil, &c.*] The poet, to shew the majesty and high spirit of Penelope, compares her to a lioness : he manages the allusion very artfully : he describes the lioness not as exerting any dreadful acts of violence, (for such a comparison is only proper to be applied to a hero) but inclosed by her enemies ; which at once shews both her danger and nobleness of spirit under



With grief and rage the mother-lion stung,  
Fearless herself, yet trembles for her young.

While pensive in the silent slumb'rous shade, 1045  
Sleep's gentle pow'rs her drooping eyes invade ;  
Minerva, life-like on imbody'd air  
Impress'd the form of Iphthima the fair :  
(Icarius' daughter she, whose blooming charms  
Allur'd Eumelus to her virgin-arms ; 1050  
A scepter'd lord, who o'er the fruitful plain  
Of Thessaly, wide stretch'd his ample reign :)  
As Pallas will'd, along the fable skies  
To calm the queen the phantom-sister flies.  
Swift on the regal dome descending right, 1055  
The bolted valves are pervious to her flight.  
Close to her head the pleasing vision stands,  
And thus performs Minerva's high commands.

it: it is in the Greek δόλιον κύκλον, which may signify either a circle of toils or nets, or a circle of enemies: the former is perhaps preferable, as corresponding best with the condition of Penelope, who was surrounded with the secret ambushes and snares of the suitors. Eustathius.

V. 1047. *Minerva, life-like on imbody'd air*  
*Impress the form, &c.]*

We have here an imaginary being introduced by the poet: the whole is managed with great judgment; it is short, because it has not a direct and immediate relation to the progress of the poem, and because such imaginary intercourses have ever been looked upon as sudden in appearance, and as sudden in vanishing away. The use the poet makes of it, is to relieve Penelope from the extremity of despair, that she may act her part in the future scenes with courage and constancy. We see it is Minerva who sends this phantom to Penelope to comfort her: now this is an allegory to express that as soon as the violence of sorrow was over, the mind of Penelope returned to some degree of tranquillity: Minerva is no more than the result of her own reflection and wisdom, which banished from her breast those melancholy apprehensions. The manner likewise of its introduction is not less judicious; the mind is apt to dwell upon those objects in sleep, which make a deep impression when awake: this is the foundation of the poet's fiction; it is no more than a dream which he here describes, but he clothes it with a body, gives it a momentary existence, and by this method exalts a low circumstance into dignity and poetry.



O why, Penelope, this causeless fear,  
 To render sleep's soft blessing unsincere? 1060  
 Alike devout to sorrow's dire extreme  
 The day-reflection, and the midnight-dream!  
 Thy son, the gods propitious will restore,  
 And bid thee cease his absence to deplore.

To whom the queen, (whilst yet her pensive mind  
 Was in the silent gates of sleep confin'd) 1066

O sister, to my soul for ever dear,  
 Why this first visit to reprove my fear?  
 How in a realm so distant shou'd you know  
 From what deep source my ceaseless sorrows flow? 1070  
 To all my hope my royal lord is lost,  
 His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast:  
 And with consummate woe to weigh me down,  
 The heir of all his honours, and his crown,  
 My darling son is fled! an easy prey 1075  
 To the fierce storms, or men more fierce than they:  
 Who in a league of blood associates sworn,  
 Will intercept th' unwary youth's return.

Courage resume, the shadowy form reply'd,  
 In the protecting care of heav'n confide: 1080

v. 1073. *And with consummate woe, &c.*] In the original, Penelope says plainly, she is more concerned for her son than her husband. I shall translate Dacier's observations upon this passage. We ought not to reproach Penelope for this seemingly shocking declaration, in preferring a son to a husband: her sentiment is natural and just; she had all the reason in the world to believe that Ulysses was dead, so that all her hopes, all her affection was entirely placed upon Telemachus: his loss therefore must unavoidably touch her with the highest degree of sensibility; if he is lost, she can have recourse to no second comfort. But why may we not allow the reason which Penelope herself gives for this superiority of sorrow for Telemachus? "Telemachus, says she, is unexperienced in the world, and unable to contend with difficulties: whereas Ulysses knew how to extricate himself upon all emergencies." This is a sufficient reason why she should fear more for Telemachus than Ulysses: her affection might be greater for Ulysses than Telemachus, yet her fears might be stronger for the son than the husband, Ulysses being capable to surmount dangers by experience, Telemachus being new to all difficulties.



On him attends the blue-ey'd martial maid ;  
 What earthly can implore a surer aid ?  
 Me now the guardian goddess deigns to send,  
 To bid thee patient his return attend.

The queen replies : If in the blest abodes 1085  
 A goddess, thou hast commerce with the gods ;  
 Say, breathes my lord the blissful realm of light,  
 Or lies he wrapt in ever-during night ?

Enquire not of his doom, the phantom cries,  
 I speak not all the counsel of the skies : 1090  
 Nor must indulge with vain discourse, or long,  
 The windy satisfaction of the tongue.

Swift thro' the valves the visionary fair  
 Repass'd, and viewless mix'd with common air.  
 The queen awakes, deliver'd of her woes : 1095  
 With florid joy her heart dilating glows :

v. 1089. *Enquire not of his doom, &c.*] It may be asked what is the reason of this conduct, and why should the phantom refuse to relate any thing concerning the condition of Ulysses ? Eustathius answers, that if the phantom had related the full truth of the story, the poem had been at an end ; the very constitution of it requires that Ulysses should arrive unknown to all, but chiefly to his wife, as will appear in the prosecution of the story : the question is very natural for an affectionate wife to make concerning an absent husband ; but this being an improper place for the discovery, the poet defers the solution of it, till the unravelling of the whole in the conclusion of the poem.

The action of this book takes up the space of two nights and one day, so that from the opening of the poem to the introduction of Ulysses are six days completed.

But how long a time Telemachus afterwards staid with Menelaus is a question, which has employed some modern French critics ; one of which maintains, that he staid no longer than these two nights at Lacedæmon : but it is evident from the sequel of the Odyssey, that Telemachus arrived again at Ithaca two days after Ulysses ; but Ulysses was twenty-nine days in passing from Ogygia to Ithaca, and consequently during that whole time Telemachus must have been absent from Ithaca. The ground of that critic's mistake was from the silence of Homer as to the exact time of his stay, which was of no importance, being distinguished by no action, and only in an episodical part. The same thing led me into the like error in the note on v. 421 of the second book, where it was said that Telemachus returned to Ithaca in less than twelve days.



The vision, manifest of future fate,  
Makes her with hope her son's arrival wait.

Meantime the suitors plough the wat'ry plain,  
Telemachus in thought already slain ! 1100

When sight of less'ning Ithaca was lost,  
Their sail directed for the Samian coast,  
A small but verdant isle appear'd in view,  
And Afteris th' advancing pilot knew :

An ample port the rocks projected form, 1105  
To break the rolling waves, and ruffling storm :

That safe recess they gain with happy speed,  
And in close ambush wait the murd'rous deed.







# T H E O D Y S S E Y.

## \* B O O K V.

### T H E A R G U M E N T.

The departure of Ulysses from Calypso.

*Pallas in a council of the gods complains of the detention of Ulysses in the island of Calypso ; whereupon Mercury is sent to command his removal. The seat of Calypso described. She consents with much difficulty, and Ulysses builds a vessel with his own hands, on which he embarks. Neptune overtakes him with a terrible tempest, in which he is shipwrecked, and in the last danger of death ; till Leucothea a sea-goddess assists him, and after innumerable perils he gets ashore on Phæacia.*

**T**H E saffron morn, with early blushes spread,  
Now rose refulgent from Tithonus' bed ;  
With new-born day to gladden mortal fight,  
And gild the courts of heav'n with sacred light.

\* Ulysses makes his first entry in this book. It may be asked where properly is the beginning of the action ? It is not necessary that the beginning of the action should be the beginning of the poem ; there is a natural and an artificial order, and Homer makes use of the latter. The action of the *Odyssey* properly begins neither with the poem, nor with the appearance of Ulysses here, but with the relation he makes of his departure from Troy in the ninth book. Bossu has very judiciously remarked, that in the constitution of the fable, the poet ought not to make the departure of a prince from his own country the foundation of his poem, but his return, and his stay in other places involuntary. For if the stay of Ulysses had been voluntary, he would have been guilty in some degree of all the disorders that happened during his absence. Thus in this book Ulysses first appears in a desolate island ;



Then met th'eternal synod of the sky,  
 Before the god who thunders from on high,  
 Supreme in might, sublime in majesty.  
 Pallas, to these, deplores th' unequal fates  
 Of wise Ulysses, and his toils relates;  
 Her hero's danger touch'd the pitying pow'r,  
 The nymph's seducements, and the magic bow'r.

Thus she began her plaint. Immortal Jove!  
 And you who fill the blissful seats above!

sitting in tears by the side of the ocean, and looking upon it as the obstacle to his return.

This artificial order is of great use; it cuts off all languishing and unentertaining incidents, and passes over those intervals of time that are void of action; it gives continuity to the story, and at first transports the reader into the middle of the subject. In the beginning of the *Odyssey*, the gods command Mercury to go down to the island of Ogygia, and charge Calypso to dismiss Ulysses: one would think the poem was to end in the compass of a few lines, the poet beginning the action so near the end of the story; and we wonder how he finds matter to fill up his poem, in the little space of time that intervenes between his first appearance and his re-establishment.

This book, as well as the first, opens with an assembly of the gods. This is done to give an importance to his poem, and to prepare the mind of the reader to expect every thing that is great and noble, when heaven is engaged in the care and protection of his heroes. Both these assemblies are placed very properly, so as not to interrupt the series of action: the first assembly of the gods is only preparatory to introduce the action; and the second is no more than a bare transition from Telemachus to Ulysses; from the recital of the transactions in Ithaca, to what more immediately regards the person of Ulysses.

In the former council, both the voyage of Telemachus and the return of Ulysses were determined at the same time: the day of that assembly is the first day both of the principal action (which is the return of Ulysses) and of the incident, which is the voyage of Telemachus; with this difference, that the incident was immediately put in practice, by the descent of Minerva to Ithaca; and the execution of it takes up the four preceding books; whereas the principal action was only then prepared, and the execution deferred to the present book, where Mercury is actually sent to Calypso.

Eustathius therefore judges rightly when he says, that in the first council, the safety alone of Ulysses was proposed; but the means how to bring it about are here under consultation, which makes the necessity of the second council.



Let kings no more with gentle mercy sway,  
 Or bless a people willing to obey, 15  
 But crush the nations with an iron rod,  
 And ev'ry monarch be the scourge of God :  
 If from your thoughts Ulysses you remove,  
 Who rul'd his subjects with a father's love.  
 Sole in an isle, encircled by the main, 20  
 Abandon'd, banish'd from his native reign,  
 Unblest he sighs, detain'd by lawless charms,  
 And press'd unwilling in Calypso's arms.  
 Nor friends are there, nor vessels to convey,  
 Nor oars to cut th' immeasurable way. 25  
 And now fierce traitors, studious to destroy  
 His only son, their ambush'd fraud employ ;  
 Who, pious, following his great father's fame,  
 To sacred Pylos and to Sparta came. 29

What words are these (reply'd the pow'r who forms  
 The clouds of night, and darkens heav'n with storms)  
 Is not already in thy soul decreed,  
 The chief's return shall make the guilty bleed ?  
 What cannot wisdom do ? Thou may'st restore  
 The son in safety to his native shore ; 35  
 While the fell foes who late in ambush lay,  
 With fraud defeated measure back their way.

Then thus to Hermes the command was giv'n.  
 Hermes, thou chosen messenger of heav'n !  
 Go, to the nymph be these our orders borne : 40  
 'Tis Jove's decree Ulysses shall return :  
 The patient man shall view his old abodes,  
 Nor help'd by mortal hand, nor guiding gods :

v. 43. *Nor be'p'd by mortal hand, nor guiding gods.*] This passage is intricate : why should Jupiter command Ulysses to return without the guidance either of man or god ? Ulysses had been just declared the care of heaven, why should he be thus suddenly abandoned ? Eustathius answers, that it is spoken solely with respect to the voyage which he immediately undertakes. This indeed shews a reason why this command is given ; if he had been under



In twice ten days shall fertile Scheria find,  
Alone, and floating to the wave and wind. 45

The bold Phæacians there, whose haughty line  
Is mixt with gods, half human, half divine,

the guidance of a god, the shipwreck (that great incident which brings about the whole catastrophe of the poem) must have been prevented by his power; and as for men, where were they to be procured in a desolate island? What confirms this opinion is, that during the whole shipwreck of Ulysses, there is no interposition of a deity, nor even of Pallas, who used to be his constant guardian; the reason is, because this command of Jupiter forbids all assistance to Ulysses: Leucothea indeed assists him, but it is not till he is shipwrecked. It appears further, that this interdiction respects only the voyage from Ogygia, because Jupiter orders that there shall be no assistance from man, ἔτε θεῶν πομπή, ἢ τ' ἀνθρώπων; but Ulysses is transported from Phæacia to Ithaca, ἀνθρώπων πομπή, or by the assistance of the Phæacians, as Eustathius observes; and therefore what Jupiter here speaks has relation only to the present voyage. Dacier understands this to be meant of any visible assistance only: but this seems a collusion; for whether the gods assist visibly or invisibly, the effects are the same; and a deity unseen might have preserved Ulysses from storms, and directly guided him to his own country. But it was necessary for the design of Homer, that Ulysses should not sail directly home; if he had, there had been no room for the relation of his own adventures, and all those surprising narrations he makes to the Phæacians: Homer therefore, to bring about the shipwreck of Ulysses, withdraws the gods.

v. 45. *Alone, and floating to the wave —*] The word in the original is σχεδίνης; νηὸς, as Eustathius observes, is understood: it signifies, continues he, a small vessel made of one entire piece of wood, or a vessel about which little wood is used; it is derived from σχεδόν, from being αὐτοσχεδίως συμπεπῆχθαι, or compacted together with ease. Hesychius defines σχεδία to be μικρὰ ναῦς, ἢ ξύλα ἃ συνδέουσι, ἢ ἔτω πλέουσι: that is, a small bark, or float of wood which sailors bind together, and immediately use in navigation. This observation appeared to me very necessary, to take off an objection made upon a following passage in this book: the critics have thought it incredible that Ulysses should without any assistance build such a vessel, as Homer describes; but if we remember what kind of a vessel it is, it may be reconciled to probability.

v. 46. ————— *Whose haughty line*  
*Is mixt with gods, —————*]

The Phæacians were the inhabitants of Scheria, sometimes called Drepanè, afterwards Corcyra, now Corfu, in the possession of the Venetians. But it may be asked in what these people resemble the



The chief shall honour as some heav'nly guest,  
 And swift transport him to his place of rest.  
 His vessels loaded with a plenteous store 50  
 Of brass, of vestures, and resplendent ore;  
 (A richer prize than if his joyful isle  
 Receiv'd him charg'd with Ilion's noble spoil)  
 His friends, his country, he shall see, tho' late;  
 Such is our sovereign will, and such is fate. 55

He spoke. The god who mounts the winged winds  
 Fast to his feet the golden pinions binds,  
 That high thro' fields of air his flight sustain  
 O'er the wide earth, and o'er the boundless main.  
 He grasps the wand that causes sleep to fly, 60  
 Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye:

gods? They are described as a most effeminate nation: whence then this god-like quality? Eustathius answers, that is either from their undisturbed felicity, or from their divine quality of general benevolence: he prefers the latter; but from the general character of the Phæacians, I should prefer the former. Homer frequently describes the gods as ἀεὶ βέλτα ζώντες, “the gods that live in endless ease:” this is suitable to the Phæacians, as will appear more fully in the sequel of the *Odyssey*. Eustathius remarks, that the poet here gives us in a few lines the heads of the eight succeeding books; and sure nothing can be a greater instance of Homer's art, than his building so noble an edifice upon so small a foundation: the plan is simple and unadorned, but he embellishes it with all the beauties in nature.

v. 56. *The god who mounts the winged winds.*] This is a noble description of Mercury; the verses are lofty and sonorous. Virgil has inserted them in his *Æneis*, lib. iv. 240.

————— “pedibus talaria nectit  
 “Aurea: quæ sublimem alis, sive æquora supra,  
 “Seu terram, rapido pariter cum flamine portant:  
 “Tum virgam capit: hæc animas ille evocat orco  
 “Pallentes, alias sub tristia Tartara mittit;  
 “Dat somnos adimitque, & lumina morte resignat.”

What is here said of the rod of Mercury, is, as Eustathius observes, an allegory: it is intended to shew the force of eloquence, which has a power to calm, or excite, to raise a passion, or compose it: Mercury is the god of eloquence, and he may very properly be said θερμαίνει, καὶ ἀγείρειν, to cool or inflame the passions, according to the allegorical sense of these expressions.



Then shoots from heav'n to high Pieria's steep,  
 And stoops incumbent on the rolling deep.  
 So wat'ry fowl, that seek their fishy food,  
 With wings expanded o'er the foaming flood, 65  
 Now sailing smooth the level surface sweep,  
 Now dip their pinions in the briny deep.  
 Thus o'er the world of waters Hermes flew,  
 'Till now the distant island rose in view :  
 Then swift ascending from the azure wave, 70  
 He took the path that winded to the cave.  
 Large was the grot, in which the nymph he found,  
 (The fair hair'd nymph with ev'ry beauty crown'd)

v. 64. *So wat'ry fowl* ———] Eustathius remarks, that this is a very just allusion; had the poet compared Mercury to an eagle, though the comparison had been more noble, yet it had been less proper; a sea-fowl most properly represents the passage of a deity over the seas; the comparison being adapted to the element.

Some of the ancient critics marked the last verse τῷ ἱκελῷ, &c. with an obelisk, a sign that it ought to be rejected: they thought that the word ὀχέσασθαι did not sufficiently express the swiftness of the flight of Mercury: the word implies no more than "he was carried:" but this expression is applicable to any degree of swiftness; for where is the impropriety, if we say, Mercury was borne along the seas with the utmost rapidity? The word is most properly applied to a chariot, ἐπὶ ὄχῳ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἄρμαλος. Eustathius.

v. 72. ——— *the nymph he found.*] Homer here introduces an episode of Calypso: and as every incident ought to have some relation to the main design of the poem, it may be asked what relation this bears to the other parts of it? A very essential one: the sufferings of Ulysses are the subject of the Odyssey: here we find him inclosed in an island: all his calamities arise from his absence from his own country: Calypso then, who detains him, is the cause of all his calamities. It is with great judgment that the poet feigns him to be restrained by a deity, rather than a mortal. It might have appeared somewhat derogatory from the prudence and courage of Ulysses, not to have been able by art or strength to have freed himself from the power of a mortal: but by this conduct the poet at once excuses his hero, and aggravates his misfortunes: he is detained involuntarily, but it is a goddess who detains him, and it is no disgrace for a man not to be able to overpower a deity.

Bossu observes, that the art of disguise is part of the character of Ulysses: now this is implied in the name of Calypso, which



She sat and sung; the rocks resound her lays:  
 The cave was brighten'd with a rising blaze: 75  
 Cedar and frankincense, an od'rous pile,  
 Flam'd on the hearth, and wide perfum'd the isle;  
 While she with work and song the time divides,  
 And thro' the loom the golden shuttle guides.  
 Without the grot, a various silvan scene 80  
 Appear'd around, and groves of living green;  
 Poplars and alder ever quiv'ring play'd,  
 And nodding cypresses form'd a fragrant shade;  
 On whose high branches, waving with the storm,  
 The birds of broadest wing their mansion form, 85  
 The chough, the sea-mew, the loquacious crow,  
 And scream aloft, and skim the deeps below.

signifies concealment, or secret. The poet makes his hero stay seven whole years with this goddess; she taught him so well, that he afterwards lost no opportunities of putting her instructions in practice, and does nothing without disguise.

Virgil has borrowed part of his description of Circe in the seventh book of the *Æneis*, from this of Calypso.

————— “ ubi Solis filia lucos  
 “ Affiduo resonet cantu, tectisque superbis  
 “ Urit odoratam nocturna in lumina cedrum,  
 “ Arguto tenues percurrens pectine telas.”

What I have here said shews likewise the necessity of this machine of Mercury: it is an established rule of Horace.

“ Nec deus interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus  
 “ Inciderit:”

Calypso was a goddess, and consequently all human means were insufficient to deliver Ulysses. There was therefore a necessity to have recourse to the gods.

v. 80. *The bow'r of Calypso.*] It is impossible for a painter to draw a more admirable rural landscape: the bower of Calypso is the principal figure, surrounded with a shade of different trees: green meadows adorned with flowers, beautiful fountains, and vines loaded with clusters of grapes, and birds hovering in the air, are seen in the liveliest colours in Homer's poetry. But whoever observes the particular trees, plants, birds, &c. will find another beauty of propriety in this description, every part being adapted, and the whole scene drawn agreeable to a country situate by the sea.



Depending vines the shelving cavern screen,  
 With purple clusters blushing thro' the green.  
 Four limpid fountains from the clefts distil, 90  
 And ev'ry fountain pours a sev'ral rill,  
 In mazy windings wand'ring down the hill:  
 Where bloomy meads with vivid greens were crown'd,  
 And glowing violets threw odours round.  
 A scene, where if a god should cast his sight, 95  
 A god might gaze, and wander with delight!  
 Joy touch'd the messenger of heav'n: he stay'd  
 Entranc'd, and all the blissful haunt survey'd.  
 Him, ent'ring in the cave, Calypso knew;  
 For pow'rs celestial to each other's view 100  
 Stand still confest, tho' distant far they lie  
 To habitants of earth, or sea, or sky.  
 But sad Ulysses, by himself apart,  
 Pour'd the big sorrows of his swelling heart;  
 All on the lonely shore he sat to weep, 105  
 And roll'd his eyes around the restless deep;

v. 89. *The purple clusters blushing thro' the green.*] Eustathius endeavours to fix the season of the year when Ulysses departed from that island: he concludes it to be in the latter end of autumn, or the beginning of winter; for Calypso is described as making use of a fire; so is Arete in the sixth book, and Eumæus and Ulysses in other parts of the Odyssey. This gives us reason to conclude, that the summer heats were past; and what makes it still more probable is, that a vine is in this place said to be loaded with grapes, which plainly confines the season of the year to the autumn.

v. 103. *But sad Ulysses, by himself apart.*] Eustathius imagines, that the poet describes Ulysses absent from Calypso, to the end that Calypso might lay a seeming obligation upon Ulysses, by appearing to dismiss him voluntarily: for Ulysses being absent, could not know that Mercury had commanded his departure; so that this favour appears to proceed from the sole kindness of the goddess. Dacier dislikes this observation, and shews that decency requires the absence of Ulysses; if the poet had described him in the company of Calypso, it might have given suspicion of an amorous disposition, and he might seem content with his absence from his country: but the very nature of the poem requires that he should be continually endeavouring to return to it: the poet therefore



Tow'rd his lov'd coast he roll'd his eyes in vain,  
'Till dimm'd with rising grief, they stream'd again.

Now graceful seated on her shining throne,  
To Hermes thus the nymph divine begun. 110

God of the golden wand! on what behest  
Arriv'st thou here, an unexpected guest?

Lov'd as thou art, thy free injunctions lay;

'Tis mine, with joy and duty to obey.

Till now a stranger, in a happy hour 115

Approach, and taste the dainties of my bow'r.

Thus having spoke, the nymph the table spread,  
(Ambrosial cates, with nectar rosy-red)

Hermes the hospitable rite partook,

Divine refection! then recruited, spoke. 120

What mov'd this journey from my native sky,

A goddess asks, nor can a god deny:

Hear then the truth. By mighty Jove's command

Unwilling, have I trod this pleasing land;

For who, self-mov'd, with weary wing wou'd sweep

Such length of ocean and unmeasur'd deep: 126

A world of waters! far from all the ways

Where men frequent, or sacred altars blaze?

But to Jove's will submission we must pay;

What pow'r so great, to dare to disobey? 130

A man, he says, a man resides with thee,

Of all his kind most worn with misery:

The Greeks (whose arms for nine long years employ'd

Their force on Ilion, in the tenth destroy'd)

At length embarking in a luckless hour, 135

With conquest proud, incens'd Minerva's pow'r:

Hence on the guilty race her vengeance hurl'd

With storms pursu'd them thro' the liquid world.

with great judgment describes him agreeably to his character; his mind is entirely taken up with his misfortunes, and neglecting all the pleasures which a goddess could confer, he entertains himself with his own melancholy reflections, sitting in solitude upon the sea-shore.



There all his vessels sunk beneath the wave!  
 There all his dear companions found their grave! 140  
 Sav'd from the jaws of death by heav'n's decree,  
 The tempest drove him to these shores and thee.  
 Him, Jove now orders to his native lands  
 Straight to dismiss; so destiny commands:  
 Impatient fate his near return attends, 145  
 And calls him to his country, and his friends.

Ev'n to her inmost soul the goddess shook;  
 Then thus her anguish and her passion broke.  
 Ungracious gods! with spite and envy curst!  
 Still to your own ætherial race the worst! 150  
 Ye envy mortal and immortal joy,  
 And love, the only sweet of life, destroy.  
 Did ever goddess by her charms engage  
 A favour'd mortal, and not feel your rage?  
 So when Aurora sought Orion's love, 155  
 Her joys disturb'd your blissful hours above,  
 'Till in Ortygia, Dian's winged dart  
 Had pierc'd the hapless hunter to the heart.

v. 155. *Orion.*] The love of Calypso to Ulysses might seem too bold a fiction, and contrary to all credibility, Ulysses being a mortal, she a goddess: Homer therefore to soften the relation, brings in instances of the like passion, in Orion and Iasion; and by this he fully justifies his own conduct, the poet being at liberty to make use of any prevailing story, though it were all fable and fiction.

But why should the death of Orion be here ascribed to Diana; whereas in other places she is said to exercise her power only over women? The reason is, she slew him for offering violence to her chastity; for though Homer be silent about his crime, yet Horace relates it.

————— “ Integræ  
 “ Tentator Orion Dianæ  
 “ Virgineâ domitus sagittâ.”

Eustathius gives another reason why Aurora is said to be in love with Orion. He was a great hunter, as appears from the eleventh book of the Odyssey; and the morning, or Aurora, is most favourable to those diversions.



So when the covert of the thrice-ear'd field  
 Saw stately Ceres to her passion yield, 160  
 Scarce could Iasion taste her heav'nly charms,  
 But Jove's swift lightning scorch'd him in her arms.  
 And is it now my turn, ye mighty pow'rs!  
 Am I the envy of your blissful bow'rs?  
 A man, an outcast to the storm and wave, 165  
 It was my crime to pity, and to save;  
 When he who thunders rent his bark in twain,  
 And sunk his brave companions in the main.  
 Alone, abandon'd, in mid-ocean tost,  
 The sport of winds, and driv'n from ev'ry coast, 170  
 Hither this man of miseries I led,  
 Receiv'd the friendless, and the hungry fed;  
 Nay promis'd (vainly promis'd!) to bestow  
 Immortal life, exempt from age and woe.

v. 161. *Scarce could Iasion, &c.*] Ceres is here understood allegorically, to signify the earth; Iasion was a great husbandman, and consequently Ceres may easily be feigned to be in love with him: the thunderbolt with which he is slain signifies the excess of heat, which frequently disappoints the hopes of the labourer. Eustathius.

v. 165. *A man, an outcast to the storm and wave,  
 It was my crime to pity, and to save, &c.*]

Homer in this speech of Calypso shews very naturally how passion misguides the understanding. She views her own cause in the most advantageous, but false light, and thence concludes, that Jupiter offers a piece of injustice in commanding the departure of Ulysses: she tells Mercury, that it is she who had preserved his life, who had entertained him with affection, and offered him immortality; and would Jupiter thus repay her tenderness to Ulysses? Would Jupiter force him from a place where nothing was wanting to his happiness, and expose him again to the like dangers from which she had preserved him? This was an act of cruelty. But on the contrary, she speaks not one word concerning the truth of the cause, viz. that she offered violence to the inclinations of Ulysses; that she made him miserable by detaining him, not only from his wife, but from his whole dominions; and never considers that Jupiter is just in delivering him from his captivity. This is a very lively, though unhappy picture of human nature, which is too apt to fall into error, and then endeavours to justify an error by a seeming reason. Dacier.



'Tis past — and Jove decrees he shall remove; 175  
 Gods as we are, we are but slaves to Jove.  
 Go then he may; (he must, if he ordain,  
 Try all those dangers, all those deeps, again)  
 But never, never shall Calypso send  
 To toils like these, her husband and her friend. 180  
 What ships have I, what sailors to convey,  
 What oars to cut the long laborious way?  
 Yet, I'll direct the safest means to go:  
 That last advice is all I can bestow.

To her, the pow'r who bears the charming rod. 185  
 Dismiss the man, nor irritate the god;  
 Prevent the rage of him who reigns above,  
 For what so dreadful as the wrath of Jove?  
 Thus having said, he cut the cleaving sky,  
 And in a moment vanish'd from her eye. 190  
 The nymph, obedient to divine command,  
 To seek Ulysses, pac'd along the sand.  
 Him pensive on the lonely beach she found,  
 With streaming eyes in briny torrents drown'd,  
 And inly pining for his native shore; 195  
 For now the soft enchantress pleas'd no more:  
 For now, reluctant, and constrain'd by charms,  
 Absent he lay in her desiring arms,

v. 198. *Absent he lay in her desiring arms.*] This passage has fallen under the severe censure of the critics, they condemn it as an act of conjugal infidelity, and a breach of morality in Ulysses: it would be sufficient to answer, that a poet is not obliged to draw a perfect character in the person of his hero: perfection is not to be found in human life, and consequently ought not to be ascribed to it in poetry: neither Achilles nor Æneas are perfect characters: Æneas, in particular, is as guilty, with respect to Dido, in the desertion of her, (for Virgil tells us they were married, “*con- nubio jungam stabili*”) as Ulysses can be imagined by the most severe critic, with respect to Calypso.

But those who have blamed this passage, form their judgments from the morality of these ages, and not from the theology of the ancients: polygamy was then allowed, and even concubinage, without being esteemed any breach of conjugal fidelity: if this be



In slumber wore the heavy night away,  
 On rocks and shores consum'd the tedious day; 200  
 There sat all desolate, and sigh'd alone  
 With echoing sorrows made the mountains groan,  
 And roll'd his eyes o'er all the restless main,  
 'Till dimm'd with rising grief, they stream'd again.

Here, on the musing mood the goddess prest, 205  
 Approaching soft; and thus the chief addrest.  
 Unhappy man! to wasting woes a prey,  
 No more in sorrows languish life away:  
 Free as the winds I give thee now to rove —  
 Go, fell the timber of yon' lofty grove, 210  
 And form a raft, and build the rising ship,  
 Sublime to bear thee o'er the gloomy deep.  
 To store the vessel let the care be mine,  
 With water from the rock, and rosy wine,  
 And life-sustaining bread, and fair array, 215  
 And prosp'rous gales to waft thee on the way.  
 These if the gods with my desires comply,  
 (The gods alas more mighty far than I,  
 And better skill'd in dark events to come)  
 In peace shall land thee at thy native home. 220

With sighs, Ulysses heard the words she spoke,  
 Then thus his melancholy silence broke.

not admitted, the heathen gods are as guilty as the heathen heroes, and Jupiter and Ulysses are equally criminals.

This very passage shews the sincere affection which Ulysses retained for his wife Penelope; even a goddess cannot persuade him to forget her; his person is in the power of Calypso, but his heart is with Penelope. Tully had this book of Homer in his thought when he said of Ulysses, "Vetulam suam prætulit immortalitati."

v. 222. *Then thus his melancholy silence broke.*] It may be asked what occasions this conduct in Ulysses? He has been long desirous to return to his country, why then his melancholy at the proposal of it? This proceeds from his apprehensions of insincerity in Calypso: he had long been unable to obtain his dismissal with the most urgent entreaties: this voluntary kindness therefore seems suspicious. He is ignorant that Jupiter had commanded his de-



Some other motive, goddess! sways thy mind,  
 (Some close design, or turn of womankind)  
 Nor my return the end, nor this the way, 225  
 On a slight raft to pass the swelling sea  
 Huge, horrid, vast! where scarce in safety sails  
 The best built ship, tho' Jove inspire the gales.  
 The bold proposal how shall I fulfil;  
 Dark as I am, unconscious of thy will? 230  
 Swear then, thou mean'st not what my soul forebodes;  
 Swear by the solemn oath that binds the gods.

Him, while he spoke, with smiles Calypso ey'd,  
 And gently grasp'd his hand, and thus reply'd.  
 This shews thee, friend, by old experience taught,  
 And learn'd in all the wiles of human thought. 236  
 How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wise?  
 But hear, oh earth, and hear, ye sacred skies!  
 And thou, oh Styx! whose formidable floods  
 Glide thro' the shades, and bind th' attesting gods!  
 No form'd design, no meditated end 241  
 Lurks in the counsel of thy faithful friend;

parture, and therefore fears lest his obstinate desire of leaving her should have provoked her to destroy him, under a shew of complying with his inclinations. This is an instance that Ulysses is not only wise in extricating himself from difficulties, but cautious in guarding against dangers.

v. 238. *But hear, oh earth, and hear, ye sacred skies!*] The oath of Calypso is introduced with the utmost solemnity. Rapin allows it to be an instance of true sublimity. The ancients attested all nature in their oaths, that all nature might conspire to punish their perjuries. Virgil has imitated this passage, but not copied the full beauty of the original.

“Esto nunc sol testis, & hæc mihi terra precanti.”

It is the remark of Grotius, that the like expression is found in Deuteronomy, “Hear, oh ye heavens, the words that I speak, “and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.” Which may almost literally be rendered by this verse of Homer.

“Ἰσὼ νῦν τόδε γαῖα, καὶ ὁρανὸς οὐρανὸς ὑπερθεῖν.



Kind the persuasion, and sincere my aim;  
 The same my practice, were my fate the same.  
 Heav'n has not curst me with a heart of steel, 245  
 But giv'n the sense to pity, and to feel.

Thus having said, the goddess march'd before:  
 He trod her footsteps in the sandy shore.  
 At the cool cave arriv'd, they took their state;  
 He fill'd the throne where Mercury had sat. 250  
 For him, the nymph a rich repast ordains,  
 Such as the mortal life of man sustains;  
 Before herself were plac'd the cates divine,  
 Ambrosial banquet, and celestial wine.  
 Their hunger satiate, and their thirst repress, 255  
 Thus spoke Calypso to her god-like guest.

Ulysses! (with a sigh she thus began)  
 O sprung from gods! in wisdom more than man.  
 Is then thy home the passion of thy heart?  
 Thus wilt thou leave me, are we thus to part? 260  
 Farewel! and ever joyful may'st thou be,  
 Nor break the transport with one thought of me.

v. 251. *For him, the nymph a rich repast ordains.*] The passion of love is no where described in all Homer, but in this passage between Calypso and Ulysses; and we find that the poet is not unsuccessful in drawing the tender, as well as the fiercer passions. This seemingly trifling circumstance is an instance of it; love delights to oblige, and the least offices receive a value from the person who performs: this is the reason why Calypso serves Ulysses with her own hands: her damsels attend her, but love makes it a pleasure to her to attend Ulysses. Eustathius.

Calypso shews more fondness for Ulysses, than Ulysses for Calypso: indeed Ulysses had been no less than seven years in the favour of that goddess; it was a kind of matrimony, and husbands are not altogether so fond as lovers. But the true reason is, a more tender behaviour had been contrary to the character of Ulysses; it is necessary that his stay should be by constraint, that he should continually be endeavouring to return to his own country; and consequently to have discovered too great a degree of satisfaction in any thing during his absence, had outraged his character. His return is the main hinge upon which the whole *Odyssey* turns, and therefore no pleasure, not even a goddess, ought to divert him from it.



But ah, Ulysses! wert thou giv'n to know  
 What fate yet dooms thee, yet, to undergo;  
 Thy heart might settle in this scene of ease, 265  
 And ev'n these slighted charms might learn to please.  
 A willing goddess and immortal life,  
 Might banish from thy mind an absent wife.  
 Am I inferiour to a mortal dame?  
 Less soft my feature, less august my frame? 270  
 Or shall the daughters of mankind compare  
 Their earth-born beauties with the heav'nly fair?  
 Alas! for this (the prudent man replies)  
 Against Ulysses shall thy anger rise?  
 Lov'd and ador'd, oh goddess, as thou art, 275  
 Forgive the weakness of a human heart.  
 Tho' well I see thy graces far above  
 The dear, tho' mortal, object of my love,  
 Of youth eternal well the diff'rence know,  
 And the short date of fading charms below; 280

v. 263. *But ah Ulysses! wert thou giv'n to know  
 What fate yet dooms thee, ———]*

This is another instance of the tyranny of the passion of love: Calypso had received a command to dismiss Ulysses; Mercury had laid before her the fatal consequences of her refusal, and she had promised to send him away; but her love here again prevails over her reason; she frames excuses still to detain him, and though she dares not keep him, she knows not how to part with him. This is a true picture of nature; love this moment resolves, the next breaks these resolutions: she had promised to obey Jupiter, in not detaining Ulysses; but she endeavours to persuade Ulysses not to go away.

v. 277. *Tho' well I see thy graces far above  
 The dear, tho' mortal, object of my love.]*

Ulysses shews great address in this answer to Calypso; he softens the severity of it, by first asking a favourable acceptance of what he is about to say; he calls her his adored goddess, and places Penelope in every degree below the perfections of Calypso. As it is the nature of women not to endure a rival, Ulysses assigns the desire of his return to another cause than the love of Penelope, and ascribes it solely to the love he bears his country. Eustathius.



Yet ev'ry day, while absent thus I roam,  
 I languish to return, and die at home.  
 Whate'er the gods shall destine me to bear  
 In the black ocean, or the wat'ry war,  
 'Tis mine to master with a constant mind;  
 Enur'd to perils, to the worst resign'd.

285

By seas, by wars, so many dangers run;  
 Still I can suffer: their high will be done!

Thus while he spoke, the beamy sun descends,  
 And rising night her friendly shade extends.

290

To the close grot the lonely pair remove,  
 And slept delighted with the gifts of love.

When rosy morning call'd them from their rest,  
 Ulysses rob'd him in the cloak and vest.

The nymph's fair head a veil transparent grac'd,  
 Her swelling loins a radiant zone embrac'd

295

With flow'rs of gold: an under robe, unbound,  
 In snowy waves flow'd glitt'ring on the ground.

Forth-issuing thus, she gave him first to wield

A weighty ax, with truest temper steel'd,

300

And double edg'd; the handle smooth and plain,  
 Wrought of the clouded olive's easy grain;

And next, a wedge to drive with sweepy sway:

Then to the neighbouring forest led the way.

On the lone island's utmost verge there stood

305

Of poplars, pines, and firs, a lofty wood,

Whose leafless summits to the skies aspire,

Scorch'd by the sun, or fear'd by heav'nly fire:

(Already dry'd.) These pointing out to view,

The nymph just shew'd him, and with tears withdrew.

Now toils the hero; trees on trees o'erthrown

311

Fall crackling round him, and the forest groan;

v. 311, &c. *Ulysses builds his ship.*] This passage has fallen under censure, as outraging all probability: Rapin believes it to be impossible for one man alone to build so compleat a vessel in the compass of four days; and perhaps the same opinion might lead



Sudden, full twenty on the plain are strow'd,  
 And lopp'd, and lighten'd of their branchy load.  
 At equal angles these dispos'd to join, 315  
 He smooth'd and squar'd 'em, by the rule and line.  
 (The wimbles for the work Calypso found)  
 With those he pierc'd 'em, and with clinchers bound.

Bossu into a mistake, who allows twenty days to Ulysses in building it; he applies the word εἴκοσι, or twenty, to the days, which ought to be applied to the trees; δένδρεα is understood, for the poet immediately after declares that the whole was compleated in the space of four days; neither is there any thing incredible in the description. I have observed already that this vessel is but Σχεδία, a float, or raft; it is true, Ulysses cuts down twenty trees to build it; this may seem too great a provision of materials for so small an undertaking: but why should we imagine these to be large trees? The description plainly shews the contrary, for it had been impossible to have felled twenty large trees in the space of four days, much more to have built a vessel proportionable to such materials: but the vessel was but small, and consequently such were the trees. Homer calls these "dry trees;" this is not inserted without reason, for green wood is unfit for navigation.

Homer in this passage shews his skill in mechanics; a shipwright could not have described a vessel more exactly; but what is chiefly valuable is the insight it gives us to what degree this art of shipbuilding was then arrived: we find likewise what use navigators made of astronomy in those ages; so that this passage deserves a double regard, as a fine piece of poetry, and a valuable remain of antiquity.

v. 317. (*The wimbles for the work Calypso found.*) And

v. 329. *Thy loom, Calypso! for the future sails  
 Supply'd the cloth.*]

It is remarkable that Calypso brings the tools to Ulysses at several times: this is another instance of the nature of love; it seeks opportunities to be in the company of the beloved person. Calypso is an instance of it: she frequently goes away, and frequently returns: she delays the time, by not bringing all the implements at once to Ulysses; so that though she cannot divert him from the resolutions of leaving her, yet she protracts his stay.

It may be necessary to make some observation in general upon this passage of Calypso and Ulysses. Mr. Dryden has been very severe upon it. "What are the tears, says he, of Calypso for being left, to the fury and death of Dido? Where is there the whole process of her passion, and all its violent effects to be found, in the languishing episode of the *Odyssey*?" Much may be said in



Long and capacious as a shipwright forms  
 Some bark's broad bottom to out-ride the storms, 320  
 So large he built the raft: then ribb'd it strong  
 From space to space, and nail'd the planks along;  
 These form'd the sides: the deck he fashion'd last;  
 Then o'er the vessel rais'd the taper mast,  
 With crossing sail-yards dancing in the wind; 325  
 And to the helm the guiding rudder join'd.  
 (With yielding osiers fenc'd, to break the force  
 Of surging waves, and steer the steady course)

vindication of Homer; there is a wide difference between the characters of Dido and Calypso; Calypso is a goddess, and consequently not liable to the same passions, as an enraged woman: yet disappointed love being always an outrageous passion, Homer makes her break out into blasphemies against Jupiter and all the gods. "But the same process of love is not found in Homer as in Virgil;" it is true, and Homer had been very injudicious if he had inserted it. The time allows it not; it was necessary for Homer to describe the conclusion of Calypso's passion, not the beginning or process of it. It was necessary to carry on the main design of the poem, viz. the departure of Ulysses, in order to his re-establishment; and not amuse the reader with a detail of a passion that was so far from contributing to the end of the poem, that it was the greatest impediment to it. If the poet had found an enlargement necessary to his design, had he attempted a full description of the passion, and then failed, Mr. Dryden's criticism had been judicious. Virgil had a fair opportunity to expatiate, nay, the occasion required it, inasmuch as the love of Dido contributed to the design of the poem; it brought about her assistance to Æneas, and the preservation of his companions; and consequently the copiousness of Virgil is as judicious as the conciseness of Homer. I allow Virgil's to be a masterpiece: perhaps no images are more happily drawn in all that poet; but the passages in the two authors are not similar, and consequently admit of no comparison: would it not have been insufferable in Homer, to have stepped seven years backward, to describe the process of Calypso's passion, when the very nature of the poem requires that Ulysses should immediately return to his own country? ought the action to be suspended for a fine description? But an opposite conduct was judicious in both the poets, and therefore Virgil is commendable for giving us the whole process of a love-passion in Dido, Homer for only relating the conclusion of it in Calypso. I will only add, that Virgil has borrowed his machinery from Homer, and that the departure of Æneas and Ulysses is brought about by the command of Jupiter, and the descent of Mercury.



Thy loom, Calypso ! for the future sails  
Supply'd the cloth, capacious of the gales. 330

With stays and cordage last he rigg'd the ship,  
And, roll'd on levers, lanch'd her in the deep.

Four days were past, and now the work compleat,  
Shone the fifth morn : when from her sacred seat  
The nymph dismiss him, (od'rous garments giv'n) 335

And bath'd in fragrant oils that breath'd of heav'n :  
Then fill'd two goat-skins with her hands divine,  
With water one, and one with sable wine :  
Of ev'ry kind, provisions heav'd aboard ;  
And the full decks with copious viands stor'd. 340

The goddess, last, a gentle breeze supplies,  
To curl old ocean, and to warm the skies.

And now rejoicing in the prosp'rous gales,  
With beating heart Ulysses spreads his sails ;  
Plac'd at the helm he sat, and mark'd the skies, 345  
Nor clos'd in sleep his ever-watchful eyes.

There view'd the Pleiads, and the northern team,  
And great Orion's more refulgent beam,  
To which, around the axle of the sky  
The bear revolving, points his golden eye : 350  
Who shines exalted on th' ætherial plain,  
Nor bathes his blazing forehead in the main.  
Far on the left those radiant fires to keep  
The nymph directed, as he sail'd the deep.

v. 344. — — — *Ulysses spreads his sails.*] It is observable that the poet passes over the parting of Calypso and Ulysses in silence ; he leaves it to be imagined by the reader, and prosecutes his main action. Nothing but a cold compliment could have proceeded from Ulysses, he being overjoyed at the prospect of returning to his country : it was therefore judicious in Homer to omit the relation ; and not draw Calypso in tears, and Ulysses in a transport of joy. Besides, it was necessary to shorten the episode : the commands of Jupiter were immediately to be obeyed ; and the story being now turned to Ulysses, it was requisite to put him immediately upon action, and describe him endeavouring to re-establish his own affairs, which is the whole design of the Odyssey.



Full sev'nteen nights he cut the foamy way ; 355  
 The distant land appear'd the following day :  
 Then swell'd to sight Phæacia's dusky coast,  
 And woody mountains, half in vapours lost :  
 That lay before him, indistinct and vast,  
 Like a broad shield amid the wat'ry waste. 360

But him, thus voyaging the deeps below,  
 From far, on Solymé's aerial brow,

v. 355. *Full sev'nteen nights he cut the foamy way.*] It may seem incredible that one person should be able to manage a vessel seventeen days without any assistance ; but Eustathius vindicates Homer by an instance that very much resembles this of Ulysses. A certain Pamphylian being taken prisoner, and carried to Tamiathis (afterwards Damietta) in Ægypt, continued there several years ; but being continually desirous to return to his country, he pretends a skill in sea affairs : this succeeds, and he is immediately employed in maritime business, and permitted the liberty to follow it according to his own inclination, without any inspection. He made use of this opportunity, and furnishing himself with a sail, and provisions for a long voyage, committed himself to the sea all alone ; he crossed that vast extent of waters that lies between Ægypt and Pamphylia, and arrived safely in his own country : in memory of this prodigious event he changed his name, and was called *Μονοψάλτης*, or the Sole-sailor ; and the family was not extinct in the days of Eustathius.

It may not be improper to observe, that this description of Ulysses sailing alone, is a demonstration of the smallness of his vessel ; for it is impossible that a large one could be managed by a single person. It is indeed said that twenty trees were taken down for the vessel, but this does not imply that all the trees were made use of, but only so much of them as was necessary to his purpose.

v. 360. *Like a broad shield amid the wat'ry waste.*] This expression gives a very lively idea of an island of small extent, that is of a form more long than large : Aristarchus, instead of *ῥινόν*, writes *ἔρινόν*, or resembling a fig ; others tell us, that *ῥινόν* is used by the Illyrians to signify *ἀχλὺν*, or a mist ; this likewise very well represents the first appearance of land to those that sail at a distance ; it appears indistinct and confused, or, as it is here expressed, like a mist. Eustathius.

v. 362. *From Solymé's aerial brow.*] There is some difficulty in this passage. Strabo, as Eustathius observes, affirms that the expression of Neptune's seeing Ulysses from the mountain of Solymé, is to be taken in a general sense, and not to denote the Solymæan mountains in Pisidia ; but other eastern mountains that bear the same appellation. In propriety, the Solymæans inhabit the sur-



The king of ocean saw, and seeing burn'd,  
 (From Æthiopia's happy climes return'd)  
 The raging monarch shook his azure head, 365  
 And thus in secret to his soul he said.

Heav'ns ! how uncertain are the pow'rs on high ?  
 Is then revers'd the sentence of the sky,  
 In one man's favour ; while a distant guest  
 I shar'd secure the Æthiopian feast ? 370

Behold how near Phæacia's land he draws !  
 The land, affix'd by fate's eternal laws  
 To end his toils. Is then our anger vain ?  
 No ; if this sceptre yet commands the main.

He spoke, and high the forky trident hurl'd, 375  
 Rolls clouds on clouds, and stirs the wat'ry world,  
 At once the face of earth and sea deforms,  
 Swells all the winds, and rouses all the storms,  
 Down rush'd the night : east, west, together roar ;  
 And south, and north, roll mountains to the shore ; 380  
 Then shook the hero, to despair resign'd,  
 And question'd thus his yet-unconquer'd mind.

Wretch that I am ! what farther fates attend  
 This life of toils, and what my destin'd end ?  
 Too well alas ! the island goddess knew, 385  
 On the black sea what perils shou'd ensue.  
 New horrors now this destin'd head enclose ;  
 Unfill'd is yet the measure of my woes ;

mits of mount Taurus, from Lycia even to Pisidia ; these were very distant from the passage of Neptune from the Æthiopians, and consequently could not be the mountains intended by Homer ; we must therefore have recourse to the preceding assertion of Strabo, for a solution of the difficulty. Dacier endeavours to explain it another way ; who knows, says she, but that the name of Solymæan was anciently extended to all very elevated mountains ? Bochart affirms, that the word Solimy is derived from the Hebrew Selem, or darkness ; why then might not this be a general appellation ? But this is all conjecture, and it is much more probable that such a name should be given to some mountains by way of distinction and emphatically, from some peculiar and extraordinary quality ; than extend itself to all very lofty mountains, which could only introduce confusion and error,



With what a cloud the brows of heav'n are crown'd ?  
 What raging winds ? what roaring waters round ? 390  
 'Tis Jove himself the swelling tempest rears ;  
 Death, present death, on ev'ry side appears.  
 Happy ! thrice happy ! who, in battle slain,  
 Prest, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain :  
 Oh ! had I dy'd before that well-fought wall ; 395  
 Had some distinguish'd day renown'd my fall ;  
 (Such as was that, when show'rs of jav'lins fled  
 From conqu'ring Troy around Achilles dead)

v. 393. *Happy ! thrice happy ! who, in battle slain,  
 Prest, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain.]*

Plutarch in his *Symposiasts* relates a memorable story concerning Memmius, the Roman general : when he had sacked the city Corinth, and made slaves of those who survived the ruin of it, he commanded one of the youths of a liberal education to write down some sentence in his presence, according to his own inclinations. The youth immediately wrote this passage from Homer.

Happy ! thrice happy ! who, in battle slain,  
 Prest, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain.

Memmius immediately burst into tears, and gave the youth and all his relations their liberty.

Virgil has translated this passage in the first book of his *Æneis*. The storm and the behaviour of Æneas are copied exactly from it. The storm, in both the poets, is described concisely, but the images are full of terror ; Homer leads the way, and Virgil treads in his steps without any deviation. Ulysses falls into lamentation, so does Æneas : Ulysses wishes he had found a nobler death, so does Æneas : this discovers a bravery of spirit, they lament not that they are to die, but only the inglorious manner of it. This fully answers an objection that has been made both against Homer and Virgil, who have been blamed for describing their heroes with such an air of mean-spiritedness. Drowning was esteemed by the ancients an accursed death, as it deprived their bodies of the rites of sepulture ; it is therefore no wonder that this kind of death was greatly dreaded, since it barred their entrance into the happy regions of the dead for many hundreds of years.

v. 397. *(Such as was that, when show'rs of jav'lins fled  
 From conqu'ring Troy around Achilles dead.)]*

These words have relation to an action, no where described in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. When Achilles was slain by the treachery of Paris, the Trojans made a sally to gain his body, but Ulysses carried it off upon his shoulders, while Ajax protected him with his



All Greece had paid me solemn fun'rals then,  
 And spread my glory with the sons of men. 400  
 A shameful fate now hides my hapless head,  
 Un-wept, un-noted, and for ever dead!

A mighty wave rush'd o'er him as he spoke,  
 The raft it cover'd, and the mast it broke;  
 Swept from the deck, and from the rudder torn, 405  
 Far on the swelling surge the chief was borne:  
 While by the howling tempest rent in twain  
 Flew sail and sail-yards rattling o'er the main.  
 Long press'd, he heav'd beneath the weighty wave,  
 Clogg'd by the cumbrous vest Calypso gave: 410  
 At length emerging, from his nostrils wide  
 And gushing mouth, effus'd the briny tide,  
 Ev'n then not mindless of his last retreat,  
 He seiz'd the raft, and leapt into his seat,  
 Strong with the fear of death. The rolling flood 415  
 Now here, now there, impell'd the floating wood.  
 As when a heap of gather'd thorns is cast  
 Now to, now fro, before th' autumnal blast;  
 Together clung, it rolls around the field;  
 So roll'd the float, and so its texture held: 420  
 And now the south, and now the north, bear sway,  
 And now the east the foamy floods obey,  
 And now the west-wind whirls it o'er the sea. }

The wand'ring chief, with toils on toils oppress'd,  
 Leucothea saw, and pity touch'd her breast: 425

shield. The war of Troy is not the subject of the Iliad, and therefore relates not the death of Achilles; but, as Longinus remarks, he inserts many actions in the Odyssey which are the sequel of the story of the Iliad. This conduct has a very happy effect; he aggrandizes the character of Ulysses by these short histories, and has found out the way to make him praise himself, without vanity.

v. 424. *The wand'ring chief, with toils on toils oppress'd,  
 Leucothea saw, and pity touch'd her breast.*]

It is not probable that Ulysses could escape so great a danger by his own strength alone; and therefore the poet introduces Leucothea to



(Herself a mortal once, of Cadmus' strain,  
But now an azure sister of the main)

Swift as a sea-mew springing from the flood,  
All radiant on the raft the goddess stood :

Then thus address'd him. Thou, whom heav'n decrees  
To Neptune's wrath, stern tyrant of the seas, 431  
(Unequal contest ;) not his rage and pow'r,  
Great as he is, such virtue shall devour.

What I suggest thy wisdom will perform !

For sake thy float, and leave it to the storm ; 435

Strip off thy garments ; Neptune's fury brave  
With naked strength, and plunge into the wave.

To reach Phæacia all thy nerves extend,

There fate decrees thy miseries shall end.

This heav'nly scarf beneath thy bosom bind, 440

And live ; give all thy terrours to the wind.

assist in his preservation. But it may be asked, if this is not contradictory to the command of Jupiter in the beginning of the book ? Ulysses is there forbid all assistance either from men or gods ; whence then is it that Leucothea preserves him ? The former passage is to be understood to imply an interdiction only of all assistance, until Ulysses was shipwrecked ; he was to suffer, not to die : thus Pallas afterwards calms the storm ; she may be imagined to have a power over the winds, as she is the daughter of Jupiter, who denotes the air, according to the observation of Eustathius : here Leucothea is very properly introduced to preserve Ulysses ; she is a sea-goddess, and had been a mortal, and therefore interests herself in the cause of a mortal.

v. 440. *This heav'nly scarf beneath thy bosom bind.*] This passage may seem extraordinary, and the poet be thought to preserve Ulysses by incredible means. What virtue could there be in this scarf against the violence of storms ? Eustathius very well answers this objection. It is evident that the belief of the power of amulets or charms prevailed in the times of Homer ; thus Moly is used by Ulysses as a preservative against fascination, and some charm may be supposed to be implied in the Zone or Cestus of Venus. Thus Ulysses may be imagined to have worn a scarf, or cincture, as a preservative against the perils of the sea. They consecrated anti-  
ently Votiva, as tablets, &c. in the temples of their gods : so Ulysses, wearing a zone consecrated to Leucothea, may be said to receive it from the hands of that goddess. Eustathius observes, that Leucothea did not appear in the form of a bird, for then how should she speak, or how bring this cincture or scarf ? The expression has



Soon as thy arms the happy shore shall gain,  
 Return the gift, and cast it in the main;  
 Observe my orders, and with heed obey,  
 Cast it far off, and turn thy eyes away. 445

With that, her hand the sacred veil bestows,  
 Then down the deeps she div'd from whence she rose;  
 A moment snatch'd the shining form away,  
 And all was cover'd with the curling sea.

Struck with amaze, yet still to doubt inclin'd, 450  
 He stands suspended, and explores his mind.  
 What shall I do? Unhappy me! who knows  
 But other gods intend me other woes?  
 Whoe'er thou art, I shall not blindly join  
 Thy pleaded reason, but consult with mine: 455

relation only to the manner of her rising out of the sea, and descending into it; the action, not the person, is intended to be represented. Thus Minerva is said in the *Odyssey*, "to fly away," *ἔρυσ ὡς ἀνόμενα*, not in the form, but with the swiftness of an eagle. Most of the translators have rendered this passage ridiculously; they describe her in the real form of a sea-fowl, though she speaks, and gives her scarf. So the version of Hobbs:

She spoke, in figure of a water-hen.

V. 454. — — — *I shall not blindly join*  
*Thy pleaded reason — — —*

Eustathius observes, that this passage is a lesson to instruct us, that second reflections are preferable to our first thoughts; and the poet maintains the character of Ulysses by describing him thus doubtful and cautious. But is not Ulysses too incredulous, who will not believe a goddess? and disobedient to her, by not committing himself to the seas? Leucothea does not confine Ulysses to an immediate compliance with her injunctions: she commands him to forsake the raft, but leaves the time to his own discretion: and Ulysses might very justly be somewhat incredulous, when he knew that Neptune was his enemy, and contriving his destruction. The doubts therefore of Ulysses are the doubts of a wise man: but then, is not Ulysses described with a greater degree of prudence, than the goddess? She commands him to leave the raft, he chuses to make use of it till he arrives nearer the shores. Eustathius directly ascribes more wisdom to Ulysses than to Leucothea. This may appear too partial; it is sufficient to observe, that the command of Leucothea was general, and left the manner of it to his own prudence.



For scarce in ken appears that distant isle  
Thy voice foretells me shall conclude my toil.  
Thus then I judge ; while yet the planks sustain  
The wild waves fury, here I fix'd remain :  
But when their texture to the tempest yields, 460  
I lanch advent'rous on the liquid fields,  
Join to the help of gods the strength of man,  
And take this method, since the best I can.

While thus his thoughts an anxious council hold,  
The raging god a wat'ry mountain roll'd ; 465  
Like a black sheet the whelming billow spread,  
Burst o'er the float, and thunder'd on his head.  
Planks, beams, dis-parted fly : the scatter'd wood  
Rolls diverse, and in fragments strows the flood.  
So the rude Boreas, o'er the field new-thorn, 470  
Tosses and drives the scatter'd heaps of corn.  
And now a single beam the chief bestrides ;  
There, pois'd a-while above the bounding tides,  
His limbs dis-cumbers of the clinging vest,  
And binds the sacred cincture round his breast : 475  
Then prone on ocean in a moment flung,  
Stretch'd wide his eager arms, and shot the seas along.  
All naked now, on heaving billows laid,  
Stern Neptune ey'd him, and contemptuous said :

Go, learn'd in woes, and other woes assay ! 480  
Go, wander helpless on the wat'ry way :  
Thus, thus find out the destin'd shore, and then  
(If Jove ordains it) mix with happier men.  
Whate'er thy fate, the ills our wrath could raise  
Shall last remember'd in thy best of days. 485

This said, his sea-green steeds divide the foam,  
And reach high Ægæ and the tow'ry dome.

Now, scarce withdrawn the fierce earth-shaking pow'r,  
Jove's daughter Pallas watch'd the fav'ring hour,  
Back to their caves she bade the winds to fly, 490  
And hush'd the blust'ring brethren of the sky.



The drier blasts alone of Boreas sway,  
 And bear him soft on broken waves away ;  
 With gentle force impelling to that shore,  
 Where fate has destin'd he shall toil no more. 495  
 And now two nights, and now two days were past,  
 Since wide he wander'd on the wat'ry waste ;  
 Heav'd on the surge with intermitting breath,  
 And hourly panting in the arms of death.  
 The third fair morn now blaz'd upon the main ; 500  
 Then glassy smooth lay all the liquid plain,  
 The winds were hush'd, the billows scarcely curl'd,  
 And a dead silence still'd the wat'ry world.  
 When lifted on a ridgy wave, he spies  
 The land at distance, and with sharpen'd eyes. 505  
 As pious children joy with vast delight  
 When a lov'd fire revives before their sight,  
 (Who ling'ring long has call'd on death in vain,  
 Fixt by some dæmon to the bed of pain,

v. 496. *And now two nights, and now two days are past.*] It may be thought incredible that any person should be able to contend so long with a violent storm, and at last survive it : it is allowed that this could scarce be done by the natural strength of Ulysses ; but the poet has softened the narration, by ascribing his preservation to the cincture of Leucothea. The poet likewise very judiciously removes Neptune, that Ulysses may not appear to be preserved against the power of that god ; and to reconcile it intirely to credibility, he introduces Pallas, who calms the winds and composes the waves, to make way for his preservation.

v. 506. *As pious children joy with vast delight.*] This is a very beautiful comparison, and well adapted to the occasion. We mistake the intention of it, as Eustathius observes, if we imagine that Homer intended to compare the person of Ulysses to these children : it is introduced solely to express the joy which he conceives at the sight of land : if we look upon it in any other view, the resemblance is lost ; for the children suffer not themselves, but Ulysses is in the utmost distress. These images drawn from common life are particularly affecting ; they have relation to every man, as every man may possibly be in such circumstances : other images may be more noble, and yet less pleasing : they may raise our admiration, but these engage our affections.

v. 509. *Fixt by some Dæmon to the bed of pain.*] It was a prevailing opinion among the ancients, that the gods were the authors of



'Till heav'n by miracle his life restore) 510

So joys Ulysses at th' appearing shore ;

And sees (and labours onward as he sees)

The rising forests, and the tufted trees.

And now, as near approaching as the sound

Of human voice the list'ning ear may wound, 515

Amidst the rocks he hears a hollow roar

Of murm'ring surges breaking on the shore :

Nor peaceful port was there, nor winding bay,

To shield the vessel from the rolling sea,

But cliffs, and shaggy shores, a dreadful sight ! 520

All-rough with rocks, with foamy billows white.

Fear seiz'd his slacken'd limbs and beating heart ;

As thus he commun'd with his soul apart.

Ah me ! when o'er a length of waters tost,

These eyes at last behold th' unhop'd-for coast, 525

all diseases incident to mankind. Hippocrates himself confesses that he had found some distempers, in which the hand of the gods was manifest, *θεῶν τι*, as Dacier observes. In this place this assertion has a peculiar beauty, it shews that the malady was not contracted by any vice of the father, but inflicted by an evil dæmon. Nothing is more evident, than that every person was supposed by the ancients to have a good and a bad dæmon attending him ; what the Greeks called a dæmon, the Romans named a genius. I confess that this is no where directly affirmed in Homer, but as Plutarch observes, it is plainly intimated. In the second book of the Iliad the word is used both in a good and bad sense ; when Ulysses addresses himself to the generals of the army, he says *Δαιμόνιε*, in the better sense ; and immediately after he uses it to denote a coward,

*Δαιμόνι' ἀτρέμας ἦσο.*

This is a strong evidence, that the notion of a good and bad dæmon was believed in the days of Homer.

v. 524. *Ab me ! when o'er a length of waters tost.*] Ulysses in this place calls as it were a council in his own breast ; considers his danger, and how to free himself from it. But it may be asked if it be probable that he should have leisure for such a consultation, in the time of such imminent danger ? The answer is, that nothing could be more happily imagined, to exalt his character : he is drawn with a great presence of mind, in the most desperate circumstances : fear does not prevail over his reason : his wisdom



No port receives me from the angry main,  
 But the loud deeps demand me back again.  
 Above sharp rocks forbid access ; around  
 Roar the wild waves ; beneath, is sea profound !  
 No footing sure affords the faithless sand, 530  
 To stem too rapid, and too deep to stand.  
 If here I enter, my efforts are vain,  
 Dash'd on the cliffs, or heav'd into the main ;  
 Or round the island if my course I bend,  
 Where the ports open, or the shores descend, 535  
 Back to the seas the rolling surge may sweep,  
 And bury all my hopes beneath the deep.  
 Or some enormous whale the god may send,  
 (For many such on Amphitrite attend)  
 Too well the turns of mortal chance I know, 540  
 And hate relentless of my heav'nly foe.

While thus he thought, a monst'rous wave up-bore  
 The chief, and dash'd him on the craggy shore :  
 Torn was his skin, nor had the ribs been whole,  
 But instant Pallas enter'd in his soul. 545  
 Close to the cliff with both his hands he clung,  
 And stuck adherent, and suspended hung ;  
 'Till the huge surge roll'd off : then, backward sweep  
 The reflux tides, and plunge him in the deep.  
 As when the Polypus, from forth his cave 550  
 Torn with full force, reluctant beats the wave ;

dictates the means of his preservation ; and his bravery of spirit supports him in the accomplishment of it.

The poet is also very judicious in the management of the speech : it is concise, and therefore proper to the occasion, there being no leisure for prolixity ; every image is drawn from the situation of the place, and his present condition ; he follows nature, and nature is the foundation of true poetry.

v. 550. *As when the Polypus.*] It is very surprising to see the prodigious variety with which Homer enlivens his poetry : he rises or falls as his subjects lead him, and finds allusions proper to repre-



His ragged claws are stuck with stones and sands :  
 So the rough rock had shagg'd Ulysses' hands.  
 And now had perish'd, whelm'd beneath the main,  
 Th' unhappy man ; ev'n fate had been in vain : 555  
 But all-subduing Pallas lent her pow'r,  
 And prudence fav'd him in the needful hour.  
 Beyond the beating surge his course he bore,  
 (A wider circle, but in sight of shore)  
 With longing eyes, observing, to survey 560  
 Some smooth ascent, or safe-sequester'd bay.  
 Between the parting rocks at length he spy'd  
 A falling stream with gentler waters glide ;  
 Where to the seas the shelving shore declin'd,  
 And form'd a bay, impervious to the wind. 565  
 To this calm port the glad Ulysses prest,  
 And hail'd the river, and its god addrest.

sent an hero in battle, or a person in calamity. We have here an instance of it ; he compares Ulysses to a Polypus ; the similitude is suited to the element, and to the condition of the person. It is observable, that this is the only full description of a person shipwrecked in all his poems : he therefore gives a loose to his imagination, and enlarges upon it very copiously. There appears a surprising fertility of invention through the whole of it : in what a variety of attitudes is Ulysses drawn, during the storm, and at his escape from it ? His soliloquies in the turns of his condition, while he is sometimes almost out of danger, and then again involved in new difficulties, engage our hopes and fears. He ennobles the whole by his machinery, and Neptune, Pallas and Leucothea interest themselves in his safety or destruction. He has likewise chosen the most proper occasion for a copious description ; there is leisure for it. The proposition of the poem requires him to describe a man of sufferings in the person of Ulysses : he therefore no sooner introduces him, but he throws him into the utmost calamities, and describes them largely, to shew at once the greatness of his distress, and his wisdom and patience under it. In what are the sufferings of Æneas in Virgil comparable to these of Ulysses ? Æneas suffers little personally in comparison of Ulysses, his incidents have less variety, and consequently less beauty. Homer draws his images from nature, but embellishes those images with the utmost art, and fruitfulness of invention.



Whoe'er thou art, before whose stream unknown  
 I bend, a suppliant at thy wat'ry throne,  
 Hear, azure king ! nor let me fly in vain 570  
 To thee from Neptune and the raging main.  
 Heav'n hears and pities hapless men like me,  
 For sacred ev'n to gods is misery :  
 Let then thy waters give the weary rest,  
 And save a suppliant, and a man distressed. 575  
 He pray'd, and straight the gentle stream subsides,  
 Detains the rushing current of his tides,  
 Before the wand'rer smooths the wat'ry way,  
 And soft receives him from the rolling sea.  
 That moment, fainting as he touch'd the shore, 580  
 He dropt his sinewy arms : his knees no more

v. 573. *For sacred ev'n to gods is misery.*] This expression is bold, yet reconcileable to truth : heaven in reality has regard to the misery and affliction of good men, and at last delivers them from it. " Res est sacra miser," as Dacier observes; and Seneca, in his Dissertation on Providence, speaks to this purpose, " Ecce spectaculum dignum ad quod respiciat, intentus operi suo, Deus ! Ecce par Deo dignum, vir fortis cum malâ fortunâ compositus !" Misery is not always a punishment, but sometimes a trial : this is agreeable to true theology.

v. 578. *Before the wand'rer smooths the wat'ry way.*] Such passages as these are bold yet beautiful. Poetry animates every thing, and turns rivers into gods. But what occasion is there for the intervention of this river-god to smooth the waters, when Pallas had already composed both the seas and the storms ? The words in the original solve the objection, *περόσθε δὲ οἱ ποίησε γαλήνην* ; or " smoothed the way before him," that is, his own current : the actions therefore are different ; Pallas gives a general calmness to the sea, the river-god to his own current.

v. 581. *He dropt his sinewy arms : his knees no more  
 Perform'd their office.*]

Eustathius appears to me to give this passage a very forced interpretation ; he imagines that the poet, by saying that Ulysses bent his knees and arms, spoke philosophically, and intended to express that he contracted his limbs, that had been fatigued with the long extension in swimming, by a voluntary remission ; lest they should grow stiff, and lose their natural faculty. But this is an impossibility : how could this be done, when he is speechless, fainting,



Perform'd their office, or his weight upheld :  
 His swol'n heart heav'd ; his bloated body swell'd :  
 From mouth and nose the briny torrent ran ;  
 And lost in lassitude lay all the man, 585  
 Depriv'd of voice, of motion, and of breath ;  
 The soul scarce waking, in the arms of death.  
 Soon as warm life its wonted office found,  
 The mindful chief Leucothea's scarf unbound ;  
 Observant of her word, he turn'd aside 590  
 His head, and cast it on the rolling tide.  
 Behind him far, upon the purple waves  
 The waters waft it, and the nymph receives.

Now parting from the stream, Ulysses found  
 A mossy bank with pliant rushes crown'd ; 595  
 The bank he press'd, and gently kiss'd the ground ;  
 Where on the flow'ry herb as soft he lay,  
 Thus to his soul the sage began to say.

What will ye next ordain, ye pow'rs on high !  
 And yet, ah yet, what fates are we to try ? 600  
 Here by the stream, if I the night out-wear,  
 Thus spent already, how shall nature bear  
 The dews descending, and nocturnal air ;  
 Or chilly vapours, breathing from the flood  
 When morning rises ? — If I take the wood, 605  
 And in thick shelter of innum'rous boughs  
 Enjoy the comfort gentle sleep allows ;  
 Tho' fenc'd from cold, and tho' my toil be past,  
 What savage beasts may wander in the waste ?  
 Perhaps I yet may fall a bloody prey 610  
 To prowling bears, or lions in the way.

without pulse and respiration ? Undoubtedly Homer, as Dacier observes, means by the expression of *ἐκάρησεν γένατα καὶ χεῖρας*, no more than that his limbs failed him, or he fainted. If the action was voluntary, it implies that he intended to refresh them, for *γόνα καμπτέιν* is generally used in that sense by Homer ; if involuntary, it signifies he fainted.



Thus long debating in himself he stood:  
 At length he took the passage to the wood,  
 Whose shady horrors on the rising brow  
 Wav'd high, and frown'd upon the stream below. 615  
 There grew two olives, closest of the grove,  
 With roots entwin'd, and branches interwove;  
 Alike their leaves, but not alike they smil'd  
 With sister-fruits; one fertile, one was wild.  
 Nor here the sun's meridian rays had pow'r, 620  
 Nor wind sharp piercing, nor the rushing show'r;  
 The verdant arch so close its texture kept:  
 Beneath this covert, great Ulysses crept.  
 Of gather'd leaves an ample bed he made,  
 (Thick strown by tempest thro' the bow'ry shade) 625  
 Where three at least might winter's cold defy,  
 Tho' Boreas rag'd along th' inclement sky.  
 This store, with joy the patient hero found,  
 And sunk amidst 'em, heap'd the leaves around.  
 As some poor peasant, fated to reside 630  
 Remote from neighbours in a forest wide,

v. 630. *As some poor peasant, fated to reside  
 Remote from neighbours ————]*

Homer is very happy in giving dignity to low images. What can be more unpromising than this comparison, and what more successfully executed? Ulysses, in whom remains as it were but a spark of life, the vital heat being extinguished by the shipwreck, is very justly compared to a brand, that retains only some small remains of fire; the leaves that cover Ulysses, are represented by the embers, and the preservation of the fire all night, paints the revival of his spirits by the repose of the night; the expression,

————— fated to reside  
 Remote from neighbours, ————

is not added in vain; it gives, as Eustathius further observes, an air of credibility to the allusion, as if it had really been drawn from some particular observation; a person that lives in a desert being obliged to such circumstantial cares, where it is impossible to have a supply, for want of neighbours. Homer literally calls these remains "the seeds of fire;" Æschylus in his Prometheus calls a spark of fire *πυρὸς πηγὴν*, or "a fountain of fire;" less hap-



Studious to save what human wants require,  
In embers heap'd, preserves the seeds of fire:  
Hid in dry foliage thus Ulysses lies,  
'Till Pallas pour'd soft slumbers on his eyes;  
And golden dreams (the gift of sweet repose)  
Lull'd all his cares, and banish'd all his woes.

635

pily in my judgment, the ideas of fire and water being contradictory.

*The conclusion.*] This book begins with the seventh day, and comprehends the space of twenty-five days; the first of which is taken up in the message of Mercury, and interview between Calypso and Ulysses; the four following in the building of the vessel; eighteen before the storm, and two after it. So that one and thirty days are compleated, since the opening of the poem.







# THE ODYSSEY.

## BOOK VI.

### THE ARGUMENT.

*Pallas appearing in a dream to Nausicaa (the daughter of Alcinous king of Phæacia) commands her to descend to the river, and wash the robes of state, in preparation to her nuptials. Nausicaa goes with her handmaids to the river; where, while the garments are spread on the bank, they divert themselves in sports. Their voices awake Ulysses, who addressing himself to the princess, is by her relieved and clothed, and receives directions in what manner to apply to the king and queen of the island.*

WHILE thus the weary wand'rer sunk to rest,  
And peaceful slumbers calm'd his anxious breast;  
The martial maid from heav'n's aerial height  
Swift to Phæacia wing'd her rapid flight.  
In elder times the soft Phæacian train  
In ease possess'd the wide Hyperian plain;  
'Till the Cyclopean race in arms arose,  
A lawless nation of gigantic foes:  
Then great Nauplious, from Hyperia far,  
Thro' seas retreating from the sound of war,  
The recreant nation to fair Scheria led,  
Where never science rear'd her laurel'd head:

v. 12. *Where never science rear'd her laurel'd head.*] The Phæacians having a great share in the succeeding parts of the Odyssey, it may not be improper to enlarge upon their character. Homer has here described them very distinctly: he is to make use of the



There, round his tribes a strength of wall he rais'd;  
 To heav'n the glitt'ring domes and temples blaz'd:  
 Just to his realms, he parted grounds from grounds, 15  
 And shar'd the lands, and gave the lands their bounds.  
 Now in the silent grave the monarch lay,  
 And wise Alcinous held the regal sway.

To his high palace thro' the fields of air  
 The goddesses shot; Ulysses was her care.

20

There as the night in silence roll'd away,  
 A heav'n of charms divine Nausicaa lay:

Phæacians to convey Ulysses to his country, he therefore by this short character, gives the reader such an image of them, that he is not surpris'd at their credulity and simplicity, in believing all those fabulous recitals which Ulysses makes in the progress of the poem. The place likewise in which he describes them is well chosen; it is before they enter upon action, and by this method we know what to expect from them, and see how every action is naturally suited to their character.

Bossu observes that the poet has inserted this verse with great judgment: Ulysses, says he, knew that the Phæacians were simple and credulous; and that they had all the qualities of a lazy people, who admire nothing so much as romantic adventures: he therefore pleases them by recitals suited to their own humour: but even here the poet is not unmindful of his more understanding readers; and the truth intended to be taught by way of moral is, that a soft and effeminate life breaks the spirit, and renders it incapable of manly sentiments or actions.

Plutarch seems to understand this verse in a different manner; he quotes it in his Dissertation upon banishment (to shew that Nausithous made his people happy though he left his own country, and settled them far from the commerce of mankind, ἐκὰς ἀνδρῶν ἀλφειῶων) without any particular view to the Phæacians; which was undoubtedly intended by Homer, those words being a kind of a preface to their general character.

This Phæacia of the ancients is the island now called Corfu. The inhabitants of it were a colony of the Hyperians: Eustathius remarks, that it has been a question whether Hyperia were a city or an island; he judges it to be a city: it was infested by the Cyclops; but they had no shipping, as appears from the ninth of the Odyssey, and consequently if it had been an island, they could not have molested the Phæacians; he therefore concludes it to be a city, afterwards called Camarina in Sicily.

Mr. Barnes has here added a verse that is not to be found in any other edition; and I have rendered it in the translation.



Thro' the thick gloom the shining portals blaze;  
 Two nymphs the portals guard, each nymph a grace.  
 Light as the viewless air, the warriour-maid 25  
 Glides thro' the valves, and hovers round her head;  
 A fav'rite virgin's blooming form she took,  
 From Dymas sprung, and thus the vision spoke:  
 Oh indolent! to waste thy hours away!  
 And sleep'st thou careless of the bridal day? 30  
 Thy spousal ornament neglected lies;  
 Arise, prepare the bridal train, arise!

v. 24. *Two nymphs the portals guard, each nymph a grace.*] The poet, as Eustathius observes, celebrates the beauty of these two attending virgins to raise their characters, that they may not be esteemed common servants, or the poet thought extravagant, when he compares Nausicaa and her damsels to Diana and her nymphs.

The judgment with which he introduces the vision is remarkable: in the Iliad, when he is to give an air of importance to his vision, he clothes it in the likeness of Nestor, the wisest person of the army; a man of less consideration had been unsuitable to the greatness of the occasion, which was to persuade kings and heroes. Here the poet sends a vision to a young lady, under the resemblance of a young lady: he adapts the circumstances to the person, and describes the whole with an agreeable propriety. Eustathius.

v. 31. *The spousal ornament neglected lies;  
 Arise, prepare the bridal train —*]

Here is a remarkable custom of antiquity. Eustathius observes, that it was usual for the bride to give changes of dress to the friends of the bridegroom at the celebration of the marriage, and Homer directly affirms it. Dacier quotes a passage in Judges concerning Sampson's giving changes of garments at his marriage-feast, as an instance of the like custom amongst the Israelites; but I believe, if there was such a custom at all amongst them, it is not evident from the passage alledged: nothing is plainer, than that Sampson had not given the garments, if his riddle had not been expounded: nay, instead of giving, he himself had received them, if it had not been interpreted. I am rather of opinion that what is said of Sampson, has relation to another custom amongst the ancients, of proposing an ænigma at festivals, and adjudging a reward to him that solved it. These the Greeks called γρίφος *Convivales*; "griphos convivales;" Athenæus has a long dissertation about this practice in his tenth book, and gives a number of instances of the ænigmatical propositions in use at Athens, and of the forfeitures and rewards upon the solution, and non-solution of them; and Eustathius in the tenth book of the Odyssey comes into the



A just applause the cares of dress impart,  
 And give soft transport to a parent's heart.  
 Haste, to the limpid stream direct thy way, 35  
 When the gay morn unveils her smiling ray:

same opinion. So that if it was a custom amongst the Israelites as well as Greeks, to give garments (as it appears to be to give other gifts) this passage is no instance of it: it is indeed a proof that the Hebrews as well as Greeks had a custom of entertaining themselves at their festivals, with these "*griphi convivales*:" I therefore believe that these changes of garments were no more than rewards or forfeits, according to the success of the interpretation.

v. 33. *A just applause the cares of dress impart.*] It is very probable that Quintilian had this verse in his view when he wrote "*Cultus magnificus addit hominibus, ut Græco versu testatum est, autoritatum.*" His words are almost a translation of it.

Ἐκ γὰρ τοι τάτων φάτις ἀνθρώπου ἀναβαίνει  
 Ἑσθλή.

What I would chiefly observe, is, the propriety with which this commendation of dress is introduced; it is put into the mouth of a young lady (for so Pallas appears to be) to whose character it is suitable to delight in ornament. It likewise agrees very well with the description of the Phæacians, whose chief happiness consisted in dancing, dressing, singing, &c. Such a commendation of ornament would have been improper in the mouth of a philosopher, but beautiful when spoken by a young lady to Nausicaa.

v. 35. *Haste, to the limpid stream.*] This passage has not escaped the raillery of the critics; Homer, say they, brings the goddess of wisdom down from heaven, only to advise Nausicaa to make haste to wash her cloaths against her wedding: what necessity is there for a conduct so extraordinary upon so trivial an occasion? Eustathius sufficiently answers the objection, by observing that the poet very naturally brings about the safety of Ulysses by it; the action of the washing is the means, the protection of Ulysses the end of the descent of that goddess; so that she is not introduced lightly, or without contributing to an important action: and it must be allowed, that the means made use of are very natural; they grow out of the occasion, and at once give the fable a poetical turn, and an air of probability.

It has been further objected, that the poet gives an unworthy employment to Nausicaa, the daughter of a king; but such critics form their idea of ancient from modern greatness: it would be now a meanness to describe a person of quality thus employed, because custom has made it the work of persons of low condition: it would now be thought dishonourable for a lady of high station



Haste to the stream ! companion of thy care,  
 Lo, I thy steps attend, thy labours share.  
 Virgin awake ! the marriage-hour is nigh,  
 See ! from their thrones thy kindred monarchs sigh ! 40  
 The royal car at early dawn obtain,  
 And order mules obedient to the rein ;  
 For rough the way, and distant rolls the wave,  
 Where their fair vests Phæacian virgins lave.  
 In pomp ride forth ; for pomp becomes the great, 45  
 And majesty derives a grace from state.

Then to the palaces of heav'n she sails,  
 Incumbent on the wings of wafting gales :

to attend the flocks ; yet we find in the most ancient history extant, that the daughters of Laban and Jethro, persons of power and distinction, were so employed, without any dishonour to their quality. In short, these passages are to be looked upon as exact pictures of the old world, and consequently as valuable remains of antiquity.

v. 41. *The royal car obtain.*] It would have been an impropriety to have rendered ἄμαξαν by the word chariot ; Homer seems industriously to avoid ἄρμα, but constantly uses ἀπήνη, or ἄμαξα ; this car was drawn by mules ; whereas, observes Eustathius, the chariot or ἄρμα was proper only for horses. The word car takes in the idea of any other vehicle, as well as of a chariot.

This passage has undergone a very severe censure, as mean and ridiculous, chiefly from the expressions to her father afterwards, ὑψηλὴν, εὐκυκλον : which being rendered, “ high, and round,” disgrace the author : no person, I believe, would ask a father to lend his high and round car ; nor has Homer said it : Eustathius observes, that εὐκυκλον is the same as εὐτροχον, κύκλα λέγονται οἱ τροχοί, or wheels ; and that ὑπερβασία, is τὸ ἐπικείμενον τετραγώνον πλινθίων τῷ ἄξονι, or the quadrangular body of the car that rests upon the axle of it ; this fully answers the criticism : Nauficæa describes the car so particularly, to distinguish it from a chariot, which had been improper for her purpose : the other part of the objection, concerning the roundness of the car, is a mistake in the critic ; the word having relation to the wheels, and not to the body of it ; which, as Eustathius observes, was quadrangular.

v. 47. *Then to the palaces of heav'n she sails.*] Lucretius has copied this fine passage, and equalled, if not surpassed the original.

“ Apparet divûm numen, sedesque quietæ,  
 “ Quas neque concutiunt venti, neque nubila nimbis  
 “ Aspergunt, neque nix acri concreta pruina  
 “ Cana cadens violat : semperque innubilus æther  
 “ Integit, & largè diffuso lumine ridet.”



The seat of gods; the regions mild of peace,  
Full joy, and calm eternity of ease. 50

There no rude winds presume to shake the skies,  
No rains descend, no snowy vapours rise;  
But on immortal thrones the blest repose:

The firmament with living splendours glows.  
Hither the goddess wing'd th' aerial way, 55  
Thro' heav'n's eternal gates that blaz'd with day.

Now from her rosy car Aurora shed  
The dawn, and all the orient flam'd with red.  
Uprose the virgin with the morning light,  
Obedient to the vision of the night. 60

The queen she sought: the queen her hours bestow'd  
In curious works; the whirling spindle glow'd  
With crimson threads, while busy damsels cull  
The snowy fleece, or twist the purpled wool.

Meanwhile Phæacia's peers in council sat; 65  
From his high dome the king descends in state,  
Then with a filial awe the royal maid  
Approach'd him passing, and submissive said;

Will my dread sire his ear regardful deign,  
And may his child the royal car obtain? 70

Say, with thy garments shall I bend my way,  
Where thro' the vales the mazy waters stray?

A dignity of dress adorns the great,  
And kings draw lustre from the robe of state.

The picture is the same in both authors, but the colouring in my opinion is less beautiful in Homer than Lucretius: the three last lines in particular are fuller of ornament, and the very verses have an air of the serenity they were intended to paint.

v. 61. — — — *the queen her hours bestow'd*  
*In curious works ————]*

This is another image of ancient life: we see a queen amidst her attendants at work at the dawn of day: "de nocte surrexit, & digiti ejus apprehenderant fufum." This is a practice as contrary to the manners of our ages, as the other of washing the robes: it is the more remarkable in this queen, because she lived amongst an idle effeminate people, that loved nothing but pleasures. Dacier.



Five sons thou hast; three wait the bridal day, 75  
 And spotless robes become the young and gay:  
 So when with praise amid the dance they shine,  
 By these my cares adorn'd, that praise is mine.

Thus she: but blushes ill-restrain'd betray  
 Her thoughts intentive on the bridal day: 80

The conscious fire the dawning blush survey'd,  
 And smiling thus bespoke the blooming maid.

My child, my darling joy, the car receive;  
 That, and whate'er our daughter asks, we give.

Swift at the royal nod th' attending train 85  
 The car prepare, the mules incessant rein.

The blooming virgin with dispatchful cares  
 Tunics, and stoles, and robes imperial bears.

The queen, assiduous, to her train assigns  
 The sumptuous viands, and the flav'rous wines. 90

The train prepare a cruise of curious mould,  
 A cruise of fragrance, form'd of burnish'd gold;  
 Odour divine! whose soft refreshing streams  
 Sleek the smooth skin, and scent the snowy limbs.

Now mounting the gay seat, the filken reins 95  
 Shine in her hand: along the sounding plains

v. 88. *Tunics, and stoles, and robes imperial bears.*] It is not without reason that the poet describes Nauficæa carrying the whole wardrobe of the family to the river: he inserts these circumstances so particularly, that she may be able to clothe Ulysses in the sequel of the story: he further observes the modesty and simplicity of those early times, when the whole dress of a king and his family (who reigned over a people that delighted in dress) is without gold: for we see Nauficæa carries with her all the habits that were used at the greatest solemnities; which had they been wrought with gold could not have been washed. Eustathius.

v. 95. *Now mounting the gay seat, &c.*] This image of Nauficæa riding in her car to the river, has exercised the pencils of excellent painters. Pausanias in his fifth book, which is the first of the *Eliacs*, speaks of a picture of two virgins drawn by mules, of which the one guides the reins, the other has her head covered with a veil: it is believed that it represents Nauficæa, the daughter of Alcinous, going with one of her virgins to the river. The words of Pausanias have caused some doubt with relation to the picture; he



Swift fly the mules : nor rode the nymph alone ;  
Around, a bevy of bright damsels shone.

They seek the cisterns where Phæacian dames  
Wash their fair garments in the limpid streams ; 100  
Where gathering into depth from falling rills,  
The lucid wave a spacious basin fills.

says, ἐπὶ ἡμιόνων, or “ upon mules,” but Homer describes her upon a car ; how then can Nausicaa be intended by the painter ? But Romulus Amasæus, who comments upon Pausanias, solves the difficulty, by observing that ἐπὶ ἡμιόνων does not signify upon mules, but a car drawn by mules, by a figure frequent in all authors. Pliny is also thus to be understood in his thirty-fifth book ; Protogenes the Rhodian painted at Athens, Paralus, and likewise Hemionida, who is said to represent Nausicaa ; Hemionida is used (as Hermolaus Barbarus observes upon that passage) as a term of art to express a virgin riding upon, or more properly drawn by mules, or ἐπὶ ἡμιόνων. Spondanus.

v. 101. *Where gathering into depth from falling rills,  
The lucid wave a spacious basin fills.]*

It is evident, that the antients had basins, or cisterns, continually supplied by the rivers for this business of washing ; they were called, observes Eustathius, πλυνοὶ, or βόθροι ; and were sometimes made of marble, other times of wood. Thus in the Iliad, book twenty-two,

Each gushing fount a marble cistern fills,  
Whose polish'd bed receives the falling rills,  
Where Trojan dames, ere yet alarm'd by Greece,  
Wash'd their fair garments in the days of peace.

The manner of washing was different from what is now in use : they trod them with their feet, στεῖλον, ἔτριβον τοῖς ποσὶ. Eustathius.

It may be thought that these customs are of small importance, and of little concern to the present ages : it is true ; but time has stamped a value upon them : like ancient medals, their intrinsic worth may be small, but yet they are valuable, because images of antiquity.

Plutarch in his Symposiacs proposes this question, Why Nausicaa washes in the river, rather than the sea, though it was more nigh, more hot, and consequently more fit for the purpose than the river ? Theon answers from Aristotle, that the sea-water has many gross, rough and earthy particles in it, as appears from its saltness, whereas fresh water is more pure and unmixed, and consequently more subtle and penetrating, and fitter for use in washing. Theophrastus dislikes this reason, and affirms that sea-water being more



The mules unharnes'd range beside the main,  
Or crop the verdant herbage of the plain.

Then emulous the royal robes they lave, 105  
And plunge the vestures in the cleansing wave;  
(The vestures cleans'd o'erspread the shelly sand,  
Their snowy lustre whitens all the strand :)  
Then with a short repast relieve their toil,  
And o'er their limbs diffuse ambrosial oil; 110  
And while the robes imbibe the solar ray,  
O'er the green mead the sporting virgins play :  
(Their shining veils unbound.) Along the skies  
Toft, and retoft, the ball incessant flies.  
They sport, they feast; Nausicaa lifts her voice, 115  
And warbling sweet, makes earth and heav'n rejoice.

As when o'er Erymanth Diana roves,  
Or wide Táygetus resounding groves ;

rough and earthy than that of rivers, is therefore the most proper, for its cleansing quality ; this appears from observation, for in washing, ashes, or some such substance are thrown into the fresh water to make it effectual, for those particles open the pores, and conduce to the effect of cleansing. The true reason then is, that there is an unctuous nature in sea-water (and Aristotle confesses all salt to be unctuous) which hinders it from cleansing : whereas river-water is pure, less mixt, and consequently more subtle and penetrating, and being free from all oily substance, is preferable and more effectual than sea-water.

v. 117. *As when o'er Erymanth Diana roves.*] This is a very beautiful comparison, (and whenever I say any thing in commendation of Homer, I would always be understood to mean the original.) Virgil was sensible of it, and inserted it in his poem.

“ Qualis in Eurotæ ripis, aut per juga Cynthi,  
“ Exercet Diana choros ; quam mille secutæ  
“ Hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades : illa pharetram  
“ Fert humero, gradiensque deas supereminet omnes :  
“ Latonæ tacitum pertentat gaudia pectus.”

It has given occasion for various criticisms, with relation to the beauty of the two authors, I will lay before the reader what is said in behalf of Homer in Aulus Gellius, and the answer by Scaliger.

Gellius writes, that it was the opinion of Valerius Probus, that no passage has been more unhappily copied by Virgil, than this comparison. Homer very beautifully compares Nausicaa, a virgin,



A silvan train the huntress queen surrounds,  
Her rattling quiver from her shoulder sounds: 120

sporting with her damsels in a solitary place, to Diana, a virgin goddess, taking her diversion in a forest, in hunting with her rural nymphs. Whereas Dido, a widow, is drawn by Virgil in the midst of a city, walking gravely with the Tyrian princes, “*Instans operi, regnisque futuris;*” a circumstance that bears not the least resemblance to the sports of the goddess. Homer represents Diana with her quiver at her shoulder, but at the same time he describes her as an huntress: Virgil gives her a quiver, but mentions nothing of her as an huntress, and consequently lays a needless burthen upon her shoulder. Homer excellently paints the fulness of joy which Latona felt at the sight of her daughter, γένηθε δὲ τὲ φρένα Λητώ; Virgil falls infinitely short of it in the word “*pertentant,*” which signifies a light joy that sinks not deep into the heart. Lastly, Virgil has omitted the strongest point and very flower of the comparison,

ῥεῖα δ' ἀρίστωτη πέλειαί, καλαὶ δὲ τὲ πᾶσαι.

It is the last circumstance that compleats the comparison, as it distinguishes Nauficæa from her attendants, for which very purpose the allusion was introduced.

Scaliger (who never deserts Virgil in any difficulty) answers, that the persons, not the places, are intended to be represented by both poets; otherwise Homer himself is blameable, for Nauficæa is not sporting on a mountain but a plain, and has neither bow nor quiver like Diana. Neither is there any weight in the objection concerning the gravity of the gait of Dido; for neither is Nauficæa described in the act of hunting, but dancing: and as for the word “*pertentant,*” it is a metaphor taken from musicians and musical instruments: it denotes a strong degree of joy, “*per*” bears an intensive sense, and takes in the perfection of joy. As to the quiver, it was an ensign of the goddess, as ἄρτεμιός τεξεν was of Apollo, and is applied to her upon all occasions indifferently, not only by Virgil, but more frequently by Homer. Lastly, ῥεῖα δ' ἀρίστωτη, &c. is superfluous; for the joy of Latona compleats the whole, and Homer has already said γένηθε δὲ τὲ φρένα Λητώ.

But still it must be allowed, that there is a greater correspondence to the subject intended to be illustrated, in Homer than in Virgil. Diana sports, so does Nauficæa; Diana is a virgin, so is Nauficæa: Diana is amongst her virgin nymphs, Nauficæa among her virgin attendants; whereas, in all these points, there is the greatest dissimilitude between Dido and Diana: and no one I believe, but Scaliger, can think the verse above quoted superfluous; which, indeed, is the beauty and perfection of the comparison. There may, perhaps, be a more rational objection made against this line in both poets,

“*Latonæ tacitum pertentant gaudia pectus.*”



Fierce in the sport, along the mountain's brow  
 They bay the boar, or chase the bounding roe :  
 High o'er the lawn, with more majestic pace,  
 Above the nymphs she treads with stately grace ;  
 Distinguish'd excellence the goddess proves ; 125  
 Exults Latona, as the virgin moves.  
 With equal grace Nauficæa trod the plain,  
 And shone transcendent o'er the beauteous train.

Meantime (the care and fav'rite of the skies)  
 Wrapt in embow'ring shade, Ulysses lies, 130  
 His woes forgot ! but Pallas now addrest  
 To break the bands of all-composing rest.  
 Forth from her snowy hand Nauficæa threw  
 The various ball ; the ball erroneous flew,

This verse has no relation to the principal subject, the expectation is fully satisfied without it, and it alludes to nothing that either precedes or follows it, and consequently may be judged superfluous.

v. 133. *Forth from her snowy hand Nauficæa threw  
 The various ball ———]*

This play with the ball was called *φεννίς*, and *ἐφετίνδα*, by the ancients ; and from the signification of the word, which is deception, we may learn the nature of the play : the ball was thrown to some one of the players unexpectedly, and he as unexpectedly threw it to some other of the company to catch, from which surprise upon one another it took the name of *φεννίς*. It was a sport much in use among the ancients, both men and women ; it caused a variety of motions in throwing and running, and was therefore a very healthful exercise. The Lacedæmonians were remarkable for the use of it ; Alexander the Great frequently exercised at it ; and Sophocles wrote a play, called *Πλυντρίας*, or Lotrices ; in which he represented Nauficæa sporting with her damsels at this play : it is not now extant.

Dionysidorus gives us a various reading, instead of *Ἐφαίραν ἔπειτ' ἔρριψε*, he writes it, *πάλλαν ἔπειτ'*, which the Latins render *πίλον*, and Suidas countenances the alteration, for he writes that a damsel named Larissa, as she sported at this play (*πίλω*, not *Ἐφαίρη*) was drowned in the river Peneus. Eustathius.

What I would further observe is, the art of the poet in carrying on the story : he proceeds from incident to incident very naturally, and makes the sports of these virgins contribute to the principal design of the poem, and promote the re-establishment of Ulysses, by discovering him advantageously to the Phæacians. He so judi-



And swam the stream: loud shrieks the virgin train,  
And the loud shriek redoubles from the main.

Wak'd by the shrilling sound, Ulysses rose,  
And to the deaf woods wailing, breath'd his woes.

Ah me! on what inhospitable coast,  
On what new region is Ulysses tost: 140

Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms;

Or men, whose bosom tender pity warms?

What sounds are these that gather from the shores:

The voice of nymphs that haunt the silvan bow'rs,

The fair-hair'd Dryads of the shady wood; 145

Or azure daughters of the silver flood;

ously interweaves these sports into the texture of the story, that there would be a chasm if they were taken away; and the sports of the virgins are as much of a piece with the whole, as any of the labours of Ulysses.

The poet reaps a further advantage from this conduct: it beautifies and enlivens the poem with a pleasant and entertaining scene, and relieves the reader's mind by taking it off from a continual representation of horror and sufferings in the story of Ulysses: he himself seems here to take breath, and indulging his fancy, lets it run out into several beautiful comparisons, to prepare the reader to hear with a better relish the long detail of the calamities of his hero, through the sequel of the *Odyssey*.

v. 139. *Ab me! on what inhospitable coast.*] This soliloquy is well adapted to the circumstances of Ulysses; and short, as is requisite in all soliloquies.

Virgil has imitated it, and Scaliger in general prefers the copy to the original.

“ Ut primum lux alma data est, exire, locosque

“ Explorare novos, quas vento accesserit oras:

“ Qui teneant (nam inculta videt) hominesne, feræne,

“ Quærere constituit” —

But it may perhaps be true, that Virgil here falls short of Homer: there is not that harmony of numbers, that variety of circumstances and sentiments in the Latin, as appears in the Greek poet; and above all, the whole passage has more force and energy by being put into the mouth of Ulysses, than when merely related by Virgil.

Dacier observes, that Abraham makes the very same reflections as Ulysses, upon his arrival at Gerar. “ Cogitavi mecum-dicens, “ forsitan non est timor Domini in loco isto.” Gen. xx. 11. “ I “ thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place;” which very well answers to καὶ σφίς νόος ἐστὶ θεοῦ.



Or human voice? but, issuing from the shades,  
Why cease I straight to learn what sound invades?

Then, where the grove with leaves umbrageous bends;  
With forceful strength a branch the hero rends; 150  
Around his loins the verdant cincture spreads  
A wreathy foliage and concealing shades.  
As when a lion in the midnight hours,  
Beat by rude blasts and wet with wint'ry show'rs,

v. 151. *Around his loins the verdant cincture spreads  
A wreathy foliage and concealing shades.]*

This passage has given great offence to the critics. The interview between Ulysses and Nausicaa, says Rapin, outrages all the rules of decency: she forgets her modesty, and betrays her virtue, by giving too long an audience: she yields too much to his complaints, and indulges her curiosity too far at the sight of a person in such circumstances. But perhaps Rapin is too severe; Homer has guarded every circumstance with as much caution as if he had been aware of the objection: he covers his loins with a broad foliage, (for Eustathius observes, that *πλόρη* signifies *κλάδος πλατύς*, or “a broad branch”) he makes Ulysses speak at a proper distance, and introduces Minerva to encourage her virgin modesty. Is there here any outrage of decency? Besides, what takes off his objection of immodesty in Nausicaa, is, that the sight of a naked man was not unusual in those ages; it was customary for virgins of the highest quality to attend heroes to the bath, and even to assist in bathing them, without any breach of modesty; as is evident from the conduct of Polycaeste in the conclusion of the third book of the Odyssey, who bathes and perfumes Telemachus. If this be true, the other objections of Rapin about her yielding too much to his complaints, &c. are of no weight; but so many testimonies of her virtuous and compassionate disposition, which induces her to pity and relieve calamity. Yet it may seem that the other damsels had a different opinion of this interview, and that through modesty they ran away, while Nausicaa alone talks with Ulysses: but this only shews, not that she had less modesty, but more prudence, than her retinue. The damsels fled not out of modesty, but fear of an enemy: whereas Nausicaa wisely reflects that no such person could arrive there, the country being an island; and from his appearance, she rightly concluded him to be a man in calamity. This wisdom is the Pallas in the allegory, which makes her to stay when the other damsels fly for want of equal reflection. Adam and Eve covered themselves after the same manner as Ulysses.

v. 153. *As when a lion in the midnight hours.]* This is a very noble comparison, yet has not escaped censure: it has been objected that it is improper for the occasion, as bearing images of too



Descends terrific from the mountain's brow : 155  
 With living flames his rolling eye-balls glow ;  
 With conscious strength elate, he bends his way  
 Majestically fierce, to seize his prey ;  
 (The steer or stag :) or with keen hunger bold  
 Springs o'er the fence, and dissipates the fold. 160  
 No less a terrour, from the neighb'ring groves  
 (Rough from the tossing furge) Ulysses moves ;  
 Urg'd on by want, and recent from the storms ;  
 The brackish ooze his manly grace deforms.  
 Wide o'er the shore with many a piercing cry 165  
 To rocks, to caves, the frightened virgins fly ;  
 All but the nymph : the nymph stood fix'd alone,  
 By Pallas arm'd with boldness not her own.

much terrour, only to fright a few timorous virgins, and that the poet is unseasonably sublime. This is only true in burlesque poetry, where the most noble images are frequently assembled to disgrace the subject, and to shew a ridiculous disproportion between the allusion and the principal subject ; but the same reason will not hold in epic poetry, where the poet raises a low circumstance into dignity by a sublime comparison. The simile is not introduced merely to shew the impression it made upon the virgins, but paints Ulysses himself in very strong colours : Ulysses is fatigued with the tempests and waves ; the lion with winds and storms : it is hunger that drives the lion upon his prey ; an equal necessity compels Ulysses to go down to the virgins : the lion is described in all his terrors, Ulysses arms himself as going upon an unknown adventure ; so that the comparison is very noble and very proper. This verse in particular has something horrible in the very run of it.

Σμερδαλέῃ δ' αὐτῇσι φάνη κεκακωμένῃ ἄλμῃ.

Dionysius Halicarnassus in his observations upon the placing of words quotes it to this purpose : when Homer, says he, is to introduce a terrible or unusual image, he rejects the more flowing and harmonious vowels, and makes choice of such mutes and consonants as load the syllables, and render the pronunciation difficult.

Pausanias writes in his Attics, that the famous painter Polygnotus painted this subject in the gallery at Athens. "Εργαζε δὲ καὶ πρὸς τῷ ποταμῷ ταῖς ὁμῇ πλυνέσαις ἐφιστάμενον Ὀδύσσεια ; he painted Ulysses approaching Nausicaa and her damsels, as they were washing at the river. This is the same Polygnotus who painted in the gallery called ποικίλη, the battle of Marathon gained by Miltiades over the Medes and Persians.



Meantime in dubious thought the king awaits,  
 And self-considering, as he stands, debates ; 170  
 Distant his mournful story to declare,  
 Or prostrate at her knee address the pray'r.  
 But fearful to offend, by wisdom sway'd,  
 At awful distance he accosts the maid.

If from the skies a goddess, or if earth 175  
 (Imperial virgin) boast thy glorious birth,

v. 175. *If from the skies a goddess, or if earth  
 (Imperial virgin) boast thy glorious birth,  
 To thee I bend !]*

There never was a more agreeable and insinuating piece of flattery, than this address of Ulysses ; and yet nothing mean appears in it, as is usual in almost all flattery. The only part that seems liable to any imputation, is that exaggeration at the beginning, of calling her a goddess ; yet this is proposed with modesty and doubt, and hypothetically. Eustathius assigns two reasons why he resembles her to Diana, rather than to any other deity ; either because he found her and her damsels in a solitary place, such as Diana is supposed to frequent with her rural nymphs ; or perhaps Ulysses might have seen some statue or picture of that goddess, to which Nauficaa bore a likeness. Virgil (who has imitated this passage) is more bold, when without any doubt or hesitation, before he knew Venus, he pronounces the person with whom he talks, " O dea, certè."

Ovid has copied this passage in his *Metamorphosis*, book the fourth ;

" — — — puer ô dignissime credi  
 " Esse deus ! seu tu deus es ; potes esse Cupido :  
 " Sive es mortalis ; qui te genuere beati,  
 " Et frater felix, & quæ dedit ubera nutrix !  
 " Sed longe cunctis longeque potentior illa  
 " Si qua tibi sponsa est, si quam dignabere tædâ !"

Scaliger prefers Virgil's imitation to Homer ;

" O, quam te memorem, virgo ! namque haud tibi vultus  
 " Mortalis, nec vox hominem sonat. O dea, certè !  
 " An Phœbi soror, an nympharum sanguinis una ?"

See his reasons in the fifth book of his *Poetics*. But Scaliger brings a much heavier charge against Homer, as having stolen the verses from Musæus, and disgraced them by his alterations. The verses are as follow :

Κύπρι φίλη μὲλὰ κύπριν, Ἀθηναίη μὲλ' Ἀθηνῆν,  
 Οὐ γὰρ ἐπιχθονίησιν ἴσην καλέω Σε γυναιξίν,  
 Ἀλλὰ Σε θυγατέρεσσι Διὸς Κρονιῶνος εἶσκα,



To thee I bend ! if in that bright disguise  
 Thou visit earth, a daughter of the skies,  
 Hail, Dian, hail ! the huntress of the groves  
 So shines majestic, and so stately moves, 180  
 So breathes an air divine ! But if thy race  
 Be mortal, and this earth thy native place,  
 Blest is the father from whose loins you sprung,  
 Blest is the mother at whose breast you hung,  
 Blest are the brethren who thy blood divide, 185  
 To such a miracle of charms ally'd :  
 Joyful they see applauding princes gaze,  
 When stately in the dance you swim th' harmonious maze.

Ὀλβίος ὃς σ' ἐφύτευσε, καὶ Ὀλβίη ἡ τέκε μήτηρ,  
 Γαστήρ, ἢ σ' ἐλόχευσε, μακαρτάτη.

Scaliger imagines this Musæus to be the same mentioned by Virgil in the Elysian fields,

“ Musæum ante omnes,” &c.

But I believe it is now agreed, that all the works of the ancient Musæus are perished, and that the person who wrote these verses lived many centuries after Homer, and consequently borrowed them from him. Scaliger calls them fine and lively in Musæus, but abject, unnervate, and unharmonious in Homer. But his prejudice against Homer is too apt to give a wrong bias to his judgment. Is the similitude of sound in *ἡσιν ἴσην* in the second verse of Musæus, harmonious ? and is there not a tautology in the two last lines ? “ Happy is the mother that bore thee, and most happy the womb that brought thee forth ;” as if the happy person in the former line were not the same with the most happy in the latter ! Whereas Homer still rises in his images, and ends with a compliment very agreeable to a beautiful woman.

But blest o'er all, the youth with heav'nly charms,  
 Who clasps the bright perfection in his arms !

But this is submitted to the reader's better judgment.

v. 187. *Joyful they see applauding princes gaze.* In the original there is a false construction, for after *Χρίσι θυμὸς λαίναται*, Ulysses uses *λευσσόντων*, whereas it ought to be *λευσέσι* ; but this disorder is not without its effect, it represents the modest confusion with which he addresses Nausicaa ; he is struck with a religious awe at the sight of her, (for so *Χέρας* properly signifies) and consequently naturally falls into a confusion of expression ; this is not a negligence, but a beauty. Eustathius.



But blest o'er all, the youth with heav'nly charms,  
 Who clasps the bright perfection in his arms! 190  
 Never, I never view'd 'till this blest hour  
 Such finish'd grace! I gaze and I adore!  
 Thus seems the palm with stately honours crown'd  
 By Phœbus' altars; thus o'erlooks the ground;

v. 193. *Thus seems the palm.*] This allusion is introduced to image the stateliness, and exactness of shape in Nausicaa, to the mind of the reader; and so Tully, as Spondanus observes, understands it. Cicero, 1. de legibus. "Aut quod Homericus Ulysses Deli se  
 "proceram & teneram palmam vidisse dixit, hodie monstrant ean-  
 "dem." Pliny also mentions this palm, lib. xiv. cap. 44. "Nec-  
 "non palma Deli ab ejusdem Dei ætate conspicitur." The story of the palm is this: "When Latona was in travail of Apollo in  
 "Delos, the earth that instant produced a large palm, against which  
 "she rested in her labour." Homer mentions it in his Hymns.

Κεκλιμένη —————

Ἀρχολάτῳ φοίνικῳ.

And also Callimachus.

Λύσατο δὲ ζωνὴν, ἀπὸ δ' ἐκλίθη ἔμπαλιν ὤμοις  
 Φοίνικος ποτὶ πρέμνον. And again,

— — — ἐπένευσεν ὁ Δῆλιος ἀδὺ τὶ φοίνιξ  
 Ἐξάπινης.

This allusion is after the oriental manner. Thus in the Psalms, how frequently are persons compared to cedars? And in the same author, children are resembled to olive-branches.

This palm was much celebrated by the ancients, the superstition of the age had given it a religious veneration, and even in the times of Tully the natives esteemed it immortal; (for so the above-mentioned words imply.) This gives weight and beauty to the address of Ulysses; and it could not but be very acceptable to a young lady, to hear herself compared to the greatest wonder in the creation.

Dionysius Halicarnassus observes the particular beauty of these two verses.

Δήλω δὴ ποιεῖ τοῖον Ἀπόλλωνος παρὰ βωμῶ,  
 Φοίνικος νέον ἔρνος ἀνερχόμενον ἐνόησα.

When Homer, says he, would paint an elegance of beauty, or represent any agreeable object, he makes use of the smoothest vowels and most flowing semivowels, as in the lines last recited: he rejects harsh sounds, and a collision of rough words; but the lines flow along with a smooth harmony of letters and syllables, without any offence to the ear by asperity of sound.



The pride of Delos. (By the Delian coast, 195  
 I voyag'd, leader of a warriour-host,  
 But ah how chang'd ! from thence my sorrow flows ;  
 O fatal voyage, source of all my woes !)  
 Raptur'd I stood, and as this hour amaz'd,  
 With rev'rence at the lofty wonder gaz'd : 200  
 Raptur'd I stand, for earth ne'er knew to bear  
 A plant so stately, or a nymph so fair.  
 Aw'd from access, I lift my suppliant hands ;  
 For misery, oh queen, before thee stands !  
 Twice ten tempestuous nights I roll'd, resign'd 205  
 To roaring billows, and the warring wind ;  
 Heav'n bade the deep to spare ! but heav'n, my foe,  
 Spares only to inflict some mightier woe !  
 Inur'd to cares, to death in all its forms ;  
 Outcast I rove, familiar with the storms ! 210  
 Once more I view the face of human kind :  
 Oh let soft pity touch thy gen'rous mind !  
 Unconscious of what air I breathe, I stand  
 Naked, defenceless on a foreign land.  
 Propitious to my wants, a vest supply 215  
 To guard the wretched from th' inclement sky :  
 So may the gods who heav'n and earth controul,  
 Crown the chaste wishes of thy virtuous soul,

v. 198. *O fatal voyage, source of all my woes !*] There is some obscurity in this passage : Ulysses speaks in general, and does not specify what voyage he means. It may therefore be asked how is it to be understood ? Eustathius answers, that the voyage of the Greeks to the Trojan expedition is intended by the poet ; for Lycophron writes, that the Greeks sailed by Delos in their passage to Troy.

Homer passes over the voyage in this transient manner without a further explanation : Ulysses had no leisure to enlarge upon that story, but reserves it more advantageously for a future discovery before Alcinous and the Phæacian rulers. By this conduct he avoids a repetition, which must have been tedious to the reader, who would have found little appetite afterwards, if he had already been satisfied by a full discovery made to Nausicaa. The obscurity therefore arises from choice, not want of judgment.



On thy soft hours their choicest blessings shed;  
 Blest with a husband be thy bridal bed; 220  
 Blest be thy husband with a blooming race,  
 And lasting union crown your blissful days.  
 The gods, when they supremely blest, bestow  
 Firm union on their favourites below:  
 Then envy grieves, with inly-pining hate; 225  
 The good exult, and heav'n is in our state.

To whom the nymph: O stranger cease thy care,  
 Wise is thy soul, but man is born to bear:  
 Jove weighs affairs of earth in dubious scales,  
 And the good suffers, while the bad prevails: 230  
 Bear, with a soul resign'd, the will of Jove;  
 Who breathes, must mourn: thy woes are from above.

v. 229. *Jove weighs affairs of earth in dubious scales,  
 And the good suffers, while the bad prevails.]*

The morality of this passage is excellent, and very well adapted to the present occasion. Ulysses had said,

Heav'n bade the deep to spare! but heav'n, my foe,  
 Spares only to inflict some mightier woe.

Nausicaa makes use of this expression to pay her address to Ulysses, and at the same time teaches conformable to truth, that the afflicted are not always the objects of divine hate; the gods (adds she) bestow good and evil indifferently, and therefore we must not judge of men from their conditions, for good men are frequently wretched, and bad men happy. Nay sometimes affliction distinguishes a man of goodness, when he bears it with a greatness of spirit. Sophocles puts a very beautiful expression into the mouth of OEdipus, κάλλος κακῶν, the "beauty and ornament of calamities." Eustathius.

Longinus is of opinion, that when great poets and writers sink in their vigour, and cannot reach the pathetic, they descend to the moral. Hence he judges the *Odyssey* to be the work of Homer's declining years, and gives that as a reason of its morality: he speaks not this out of derogation to Homer, for he compares him to the sun, which though it has not the same warmth as when in the meridian, is always of the same bigness: this is no dishonour to the *Odyssey*; the most useful, if not the most beautiful circumstance is allowed it, I mean instruction: in the *Odyssey* Homer appears to be the better man, in the *Iliad* the better poet.



But since thou tread'st our hospitable shore,  
 'Tis mine to bid the wretched grieve no more;  
 To cloath the naked, and thy way to guide — 235  
 Know, the Phæacian tribes this land divide;  
 From great Alcinous' royal loins I spring,  
 A happy nation, and an happy king.

Then to her maids — Why, why, ye coward train,  
 These fears, this flight? ye fear, and fly in vain. 240  
 Dread ye a foe? dismiss that idle dread,  
 'Tis death with hostile step these shores to tread:  
 Safe in the love of heav'n, an ocean flows  
 Around our realm, a barrier from the foes;  
 'Tis ours this son of sorrow to relieve, 245  
 Chear the sad heart, nor let affliction grieve.  
 By Jove the stranger and the poor are sent,  
 And what to those we give, to Jove is lent.

v. 242. *'Tis death with hostile step these shores to tread.*] This I take to be the meaning of the word διεγός, which Eustathius explains by ζῶν καὶ ἐρρῶμενος, “vivid & valens;” or, “he shall not be long lived.” But it may be asked how this character of valour in destroying their enemies can agree with the Phæacians, an effeminate, unwarlike nation? Eustathius answers, that the protection of the gods is the best defence, and upon this Nauficaa relies. But then it is necessary that man should co-operate with the gods; for it is in vain to rely upon the gods for safety, if we ourselves make not use of means proper for it: whereas the Phæacians were a people wholly given up to luxury and pleasures. The true reason then of Nauficaa's praise of the Phæacians may perhaps be drawn from that honourable partiality, and innate love which every person feels for his country. She knew no people greater than the Phæacians, and having ever lived in full security from enemies, she concludes that it is not in the power of enemies to disturb that security.

v. 247. *By Jove the stranger and the poor are sent,  
 And what to those we give, to Jove is lent.*]

This is a very remarkable passage, full of such a pious generosity as the wisest teach, and the best practise. I am sensible it may be understood two ways; and in both, it bears an excellent instruction. The words are, “the poor and stranger are from Jove, and a small gift is acceptable to them,” or “acceptable to Jupiter,” Διὶ φίλον. I have chosen the latter, in conformity to the eastern way of thinking: “He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord,” as it is expressed in the Proverbs.



Then food supply, and bathe his fainting limbs  
Where waving shades obscure the mazy streams. 250

Obedient to the call, the chief they guide  
To the calm current of the secret tide;  
Close by the stream a royal dress they lay,  
A vest and robe, with rich embroid'ry gay:  
Then unguents in a vase of gold supply, 255  
That breath'd a fragrance thro' the balmy sky.

To them the king. No longer I detain  
Your friendly care: retire, ye virgin train!  
Retire, while from my weary'd limbs I lave  
The foul pollution of the briny wave: 260  
Ye gods! since this worn frame refection knew,  
What scenes have I survey'd of dreadful view?  
But, nymphs, recede! sage chastity denies  
To raise the blush, or pain the modest eyes.

The nymphs withdrawn, at once into the tide 265  
Active he bounds; the flashing waves divide:

v. 263. *But, nymphs, recede! &c.*] This place seems contradictory to the practice of antiquity, and other passages in the *Odyssey*: nothing is more frequent than for heroes to make use of the ministry of damsels in bathing, as appears from Polycaeste and Telemachus, &c. Whence is it then that Ulysses commands the attendants of Nausicaa to withdraw while he bathes? Spondanus is of opinion, that the poet intended to condemn an indecent custom of those ages solemnly by the mouth of so wise a person as Ulysses: but there is no other instance in all his works to confirm that conjecture. I am at a loss to give a better reason, unless the difference of the places might make an alteration in the action. It is possible that in baths prepared for public use, there might be some convenience to defend the person who bathed in some degree from observation, which might be wanting in an open river, so that the action might be more indecent in the one instance than in the other, and consequently occasion these words of Ulysses: but this is a conjecture, and submitted as such to the reader's better judgment.

v. 265. — — — — at once into the tide  
*Active he bounds ———*]

It may be asked why Ulysses prefers the river waters in washing, to the waters of the sea, in the *Odyssey*; whereas in the tenth book of the *Iliad*, after the death of Dolon, Diomed and Ulysses prefer



O'er all his limbs his hands the wave diffuse,  
 And from his locks compress the weedy ooze ;  
 The balmy oil, a fragrant show'r, he sheds ;  
 Then, drest, in pomp magnificently treads. 270  
 The warrior goddess gives his frame to shine  
 With majesty enlarg'd, and air divine :

the sea waters to those of the river? There is a different reason for this different regimen: in the Iliad, Ulysses was fatigued, and sweated with the labours of the night, and in such a case the sea waters being more rough are more purifying and corroborating: but here Ulysses comes from the seas, and (as Plutarch in his Symposiacs observes upon this passage) the more subtle and light particles exhale by the heat of the sun, but the rough and the saline stick to the body, till washed away by fresh waters.

v. 271. *The warrior goddess gives his frame to shine.*] Poetry delights in the marvellous, and ennobles the most ordinary subjects by dressing them with poetical ornaments, and giving them an adventitious dignity. The foundation of this fiction, of Ulysses receiving beauty from Pallas, is only this: the shipwreck and sufferings of Ulysses had changed his face and features, and his long fasting given him a pale and sorrowful aspect; but being bathed, perfumed, and dressed in robes, he appears another man, full of life and beauty. This sudden change gave Homer the hint to improve it into a miracle; and he ascribes it to Minerva, to give a dignity to his poetry. He further embellishes the description by a very happy comparison. Virgil has imitated it.

“ Os humerosque deo similis; namque ipsa decoram  
 “ Cæsariem nato genetrix, lumenque juventæ  
 “ Purpureum, & lætos oculis afflârat honores.  
 “ Quale manus addunt ebori decus, aut ubi flavo  
 “ Argentum Pariusve lapis circumdatur auro.”

Scaliger, in the fifth book of his Poetics, prefers Virgil before Homer; and perhaps his opinion is just: “Manus” he says is more elegant than “vir;” and “addunt ebori decus,” than χαρίεντα δὲ ἔρσα τελείει. “Os humerosque Deo similis,” carries a nobler idea than Homer's μέζονα ἢ πάσσονα; and above all,

“ — — — — Lumenque juventæ  
 “ Purpureum, & lætos oculis afflârat honores,”

is inexpressibly beautiful.

It is said that this image is made by the assistance of Vulcan and Minerva: why by two deities? Eustathius answers, the first rudiments and formation of it in the fire is proper to Vulcan, and Minerva is the president of arts; Minerva gives the artificer wisdom in designing, and Vulcan skill in labouring and finishing the work.



Back from his brows a length of hair unfurls,  
 His hyacinthine locks descend in wavy curls.  
 As by some artist to whom Vulcan gives 275  
 His skill divine, a breathing statue lives ;  
 By Pallas taught, he frames the wond'rous mould,  
 And o'er the silver pours the fusil gold.  
 So Pallas his heroic frame improves  
 With heav'nly bloom, and like a god he moves. 280  
 A fragrance breathes around : majestic grace  
 Attends his steps : th' astonish'd virgins gaze.  
 Soft he reclines along the murm'ring seas,  
 Inhaling freshness from the fanning breeze.

The wond'ring nymph his glorions port survey'd,  
 And to her damsels, with amazement, said. 286

Not without care divine the stranger treads  
 This land of joy : his steps some godhead leads :  
 Would Jove destroy him, sure he had been driv'n  
 Far from this realm, the fav'rite isle of heav'n. 290  
 Late a sad spectacle of woe, he trod  
 The desert sands, and now he looks a god.  
 Oh heav'n ! in my connubial hour decree  
 This man my spouse, or such a spouse as he !

v. 283. *He reclines along the murm'ring seas.*] This little circumstance, Eustathius observes, is not without its effect ; the poet withdraws Ulysses, to give Nausicaa an opportunity to speak freely in his praise without a breach of modesty : she speaks apart to her damsels, and by this conduct, Ulysses neither hears his own commendation, which is a pain to all worthy spirits, nor does Nausicaa betray an indecent sensibility, because she speaks only to her own sex and attendants.

v. 293. *Oh heav'n ! in my connubial hour decree  
 This man my spouse, or such a spouse as he !*]

This passage has been censured as an outrage against modesty and credibility ; is it probable that a young princess should fall in love with a stranger at first sight ? and if she really falls in love, is it not an indecent passion ? I will lay before the reader the observations of Plutarch upon it. “ If Nausicaa, upon casting her eyes  
 “ upon this stranger, and feeling such a passion for him as Calypso  
 “ felt, talks thus out of wantonness, her conduct is blameable :



But haste, the viands and the bowl provide — 295  
 The maids the viands, and the bowl supply'd :  
 Eager he fed, for keen his hunger rag'd,  
 And with the gen'rous vintage thirst asswag'd.

Now on return her care Nauficæa bends,  
 The robes resumes, the glittering car ascends, 300  
 Far blooming o'er the field : and as she press'd  
 The splendid feat, the list'ning chief address'd.

Stranger arise ! the sun rolls down the day,  
 Lo, to the palace I direct thy way :  
 Where in high state the nobles of the land 305  
 Attend my royal fire, a radiant band.

But hear, tho' wisdom in thy soul presides,  
 Speaks from thy tongue, and ev'ry action guides ;  
 Advance at distance, while I pass the plain  
 Where o'er the furrows waves the golden grain : 310

Alone I re-ascend — With airy mounds  
 A strength of wall the guarded city bounds :  
 The jutting land two ample bays divides ;  
 Full thro' the narrow mouths descend the tides :

“ but if perceiving his wisdom by his prudent address, she wishes  
 “ for such an husband, rather than a person of her own country  
 “ who had no better qualifications than singing, dancing and dress-  
 “ ing, she is to be commended.” This discovers no weakness,  
 but prudence, and a true judgment. She deserves to be imitated  
 by the fair sex, who ought to prefer a good understanding before a  
 fine coat, and a man of worth before a good dancer.

Besides, it may be offered in vindication of Nauficæa, that she  
 had in the morning been assured by a vision from heaven, that her  
 nuptials were at hand ; this might induce her to believe that Ulysses  
 was the person intended by the vision for her husband ; and his  
 good sense and prudent behaviour, as Dacier observes, might make  
 her wish it, without any imputation of immodesty.

v. 313. *The jutting land two ample bays divides ;  
 Full thro' the narrow mouths descend the tides.*]

This passage is not without its difficulty : but the scholiast upon  
 Dionysius Periegetes gives us a full explication of it. Δυὸ λιμένας  
 ἔχει ἡ φαίαξ, τὸν μὲν Ἀλκινόου, τὸν δὲ Ὑλλῶ διὸ φησὶ Καλλίμαχος  
 ἀμφίδυμος φαίαξ. The island of Phæacia has two ports, the one  
 called the port of Alcinous, the other of Hyllus ; thus Callima-



The spacious basons arching rocks enclose, 315  
A sure defence from ev'ry storm that blows.

Close to the bay great Neptune's fane adjoins;  
And near, a forum flank'd with marble shines,  
Where the bold youth, the num'rous fleets to store,  
Shape the broad sail, or smooth the taper oar: 320

For not the bow they bend, nor boast the skill  
To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill;  
But the tall mast above the vessel rear,  
Or teach the flutt'ring sail to float in air.

They rush into the deep with eager joy, 325  
Climb the steep surge, and thro' the tempest fly;

chus calls it the place of two ports. And Apollonius for the same reason calls it ἀμφιλαφής, or the place which is entered by two ports. Dacier.

v. 325. *They rush into the deep with eager joy.*] It is very judicious in the poet to let us thus fully into the character of the Phæacians, before he comes to shew what relation they have to the story of the Odyssey: he describes Alcinous and the people of better rank, as persons of great hospitality and humanity; this gives an air of probability to the free and benevolent reception which Ulysses found: he describes the vulgar as excellent navigators; and he does this not only because they are islanders, but, as Eustathius observes, to prepare the way for the return of Ulysses, who was to be restored by their conduct to his country, even against the inclination of Neptune, the god of the ocean. But it may be asked, is not Homer inconsistent with himself, when he paints the Phæacians as men of the utmost humanity, and immediately after calls them a proud unpolished race, and given up to censoriousness? It is easy to reconcile the seeming contradiction, by applying the character of humanity to the higher rank of the nation, and the other to the vulgar and the mariners. I believe the same character holds good to this day amongst any people who are much addicted to sea-affairs; they contract a roughness, by being secluded from the more general converse of mankind, and consequently are strangers to that affability, which is the effect of a more enlarged conversation. But what is it that inclines the Phæacians to be censorious? It is to be remembered, that they are every where described as a people abandoned to idleness; to idleness therefore that part of their character is to be imputed. When the thoughts are not employed upon things, it is usual to turn them upon persons: a good man has not the inclination, an industrious man not the leisure, to be censorious; so that censure is the property of idleness. This I take to be the moral, intended to be drawn from the character of the Phæacians.



A proud, unpolish'd race — To me belongs  
 The care to shun the blast of slanderous tongues;  
 Lest malice, prone the virtuous to defame,  
 Thus with vile censure taint my spotless name. 330

“What stranger this, whom thus Nausicaa leads?  
 “Heav'ns! with what graceful majesty he treads?  
 “Perhaps a native of some distant shore,  
 “The future consort of her bridal hour;  
 “Or rather, some descendant of the skies; 335  
 “Won by her pray'r, th' aerial bridegroom flies.  
 “Heav'n on that hour its choicest influence shed,  
 “That gave a foreign spouse to crown her bed!  
 “All, all the god-like worthies that adorn  
 “This realm, she flies: Phæacia is her scorn.” 340

And just the blame: for female innocence  
 Not only flies the guilt, but shuns th' offence:  
 Th' unguarded virgin, as unchaste, I blame;  
 And the least freedom with the sex is shame,

v. 331. *What stranger this, whom thus Nausicaa leads?*] This is an instance of the great art of Homer, in saying every thing properly. Nausicaa had conceived a great esteem for Ulysses, and she had an inclination to let him know it; but modesty forbid her to reveal it openly: how then shall Ulysses know the value she has for his person, consistently with the modesty of Nausicaa? Homer with great address puts her compliments into the mouth of the Phæacians, and by this method she speaks her own sentiments, as the sentiments of the Phæacians: Nausicaa, as it were, is withdrawn, and a whole nation introduced for a more general praise of Ulysses.

v. 335. *Or rather, some descendant of the skies.*] Eustathius remarks, that the compliments of Nausicaa answer the compliments made to her by Ulysses: he resembled her to Diana, she him to the gods. But it may be asked, are not both these extravagancies? and is it not beyond all credibility that Nausicaa should be thought a goddess, or Ulysses a god? In these ages it would be judged extravagant, but it is to be remembered that in the days of Homer every grove, river, fountain, and oak-tree, were thought to have their peculiar deities; this makes such relations as these more reconcilable, if not to truth, at least to the opinions of antiquity, which is sufficient for poetry.

v. 344. — *the least freedom with the sex is shame,*

*'Till our consenting fires a spouse provide.]*

This is an admirable picture of ancient female life among the ori-



'Till our consenting fires a spouse provide,  
And public nuptials justify the bride.

345

But would'st thou soon review thy native plain?  
Attend, and speedy thou shalt pass the main:

entals; the virgins were very retired, and never appeared amongst men but upon extraordinary occasions, and then always in the presence of the father or mother: but when they were married, says Eustathius, they had more liberty. Thus Helen converses freely with Telemachus and Pisistratus, and Penelope sometimes with the suitors. Nauficaa delivers her judgment sententially, to give it more weight; what can be more modest than these expressions? And yet they have been greatly traduced by Monsieur Perrault, a French critic; he translates the passage so as to imply that "Nauficaa disapproves of a virgin's lying with a man, without the permission of her father, before marriage;" ἀνδράσι μιῶσθαι led him into this mistake, which is sometimes used in such a signification, but here it only means conversation: if the word μιῶσθαι signified more than keeping company, it would be more ridiculous, as Boileau observes upon Longinus, than Perrault makes it: for it is joined to ἀνδράσι, and then it would infer that Nauficaa disapproves of a young woman's lying with several men before she was married, without the licence of her father. The passage, continues Boileau, is full of honour and decency: Nauficaa has a design to introduce Ulysses to her father, she tells him, she goes before to prepare the way for his reception, but that she must not be seen to enter the city in his company, for fear of giving offence, which a modest woman ought not to give: a virtuous woman is obliged not only to avoid immodesty, but the appearance of it; and for her part she could not approve of a young woman keeping company with men without the permission of her father or mother, before she was married. Thus the indecency is not in Homer, but in the critic: it is indeed, in Homer, an excellent lecture of modesty and morality.

v. 347. *But would'st thou soon review thy native plain?*] Eustathius and Dacier are both of opinion, that Nauficaa had conceived a passion for Ulysses: I think this passage is an evidence that she rather admired and esteemed, than loved him; for it is contrary to the nature of the passion to give directions for the departure of the person beloved, but rather to invent excuses to prolong his stay. It is true Nauficaa had wished in the foregoing parts of this book, that she might have Ulysses for her husband, or such an husband as Ulysses: but this only shews that she admired his accomplishments, nor could she have added "such a spouse as he," at all, if her affections had been engaged and fixed upon Ulysses only. This likewise takes off the objection of a too great fondness in Nauficaa; for it might have appeared too great a fondness to have fallen in love at the first with an absolute stranger.



Nigh where a grove with verdant poplars crown'd,  
To Pallas sacred, shades the holy ground, 350

We bend our way : a bubbling fount distills  
A lucid lake, and thence descends in rills ;  
Around the grove a mead with lively green  
Falls by degrees, and forms a beauteous scene ;  
Here a rich juice the royal vineyard pours ; 355  
And there the garden yields a waste of flow'rs.

Hence lies the town, as far as to the ear  
Floats a strong shout along the waves of air,  
There wait embow'r'd, while I ascend alone  
To great Alcinous on his royal throne. 360

Arriv'd, advance impatient of delay,  
And to the lofty palace bend thy way :  
The lofty palace overlooks the town,  
From ev'ry dome by pomp superiour known ;  
A child may point the way. With earnest gait 365

Seek thou the queen along the rooms of state ;  
Her royal hand a wond'rous work designs,  
Around a circle of bright damsels shines,  
Part twist the threads, and part the wool dispose,  
While with the purple orb the spindle glows. 370

High on a throne, amid the Scherian pow'rs,  
My royal father shares the genial hours ;  
But to the queen thy mournful tale disclose ;  
With the prevailing eloquence of woes :  
So shalt thou view with joy thy natal shore, 375  
Tho' mountains rise between, and oceans roar.

She added not, but waving as she wheel'd  
The silver scourge, it glitter'd o'er the field :

v. 373. *But to the queen thy mournful tale disclose.*] This little circumstance, seemingly of small importance, is not without its beauty. It is natural for a daughter to apply to the mother, rather than the father : women are likewise generally of a compassionate nature, and therefore the poet first interests the queen in the cause of Ulysses. At the same time he gives a pattern of conjugal affection, in the union between Arete and Alcinous.



With skill the virgin guides th' embroider'd rein,  
Slow rolls the car before th' attending train. 380

Now whirling down the heav'ns, the golden day  
Shot thro' the western clouds a dewy ray ;  
The grove they reach, where from the sacred shade  
To Pallas thus the pensive hero pray'd.

Daughter of Jove ! whose arms in thunder wield 385  
Th' avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield ;  
Forsook by thee, in vain I fought thy aid  
When booming billows clos'd above my head :  
Attend, unconquer'd maid ! accord my vows,  
Bid the great hear, and pitying heal my woes. 390

This heard Minerva, but forbore to fly  
(By Neptune aw'd) apparent from the sky :  
Stern god ! who rag'd with vengeance unrestrain'd,  
'Till great Ulysses hail'd his native land.

v. 391. — — — — but forbore to fly  
(By Neptune aw'd) apparent from the sky.]

We see the ancients held a subordination among the deities, and though different in inclinations, yet they act in harmony : one god resists not another deity. This is more fully explained, as Eustathius observes, by Euripides, in his *Hippolytus* ; where Diana says, it is not the custom of the gods to resist one the other, when they take vengeance even upon the favourites of other deities. The late tempest that Neptune had raised for the destruction of Ulysses, was an instance of Neptune's implacable anger : this makes Minerva take such measures as to avoid an open opposition, and yet consult the safety of Ulysses : she descends, but it is secretly.

This book takes up part of the night, and the whole thirty-second day ; the vision of Nauficæa is related in the preceding night, and Ulysses enters the city a little after the sun sets in the following evening. So that thirty-two days are completed since the opening of the poem.

This book in general is full of life and variety : it is true, the subject of it is simple and unadorned, but improved by the poet, and rendered entertaining and noble. The muse of Homer is like his Minerva, with respect to Ulysses, who from an object of compassion improves his majesty, and gives a grace to every feature.







# T H E O D Y S S E Y.

## \* B O O K VII.

### T H E A R G U M E N T.

The court of Alcinous.

*The princess Nausicaa returns to the city, and Ulysses soon after follows thither. He is met by Pallas in the form of a young virgin, who guides him to the palace, and directs him in what manner to address the queen Arete. She then involves him in a mist, which causes him to pass invisible. The palace and gardens of Alcinous described. Ulysses falling at the feet of the queen, the mist disperses, the Phæacians admire, and receive him with respect. The queen enquiring by what means he had the garments he then wore, he relates to her and Alcinous his departure from Calypso, and his arrival on their dominions.*

*The same day continues, and the book ends with the night.*

**T**H E patient, heav'nly man thus suppliant pray'd ;  
While the slow mules draw on th' imperial maid :  
Thro' the proud streets she moves, the public gaze :  
The turning wheel before the palace stays.

\* This book opens with the introduction of Ulysses to Alcinous ; every step the poet takes carries on the main design of the poem, with a progress so natural, that each incident seems really to have happened, and not to be invention. Thus Nausicaa accidentally meets Ulysses, and introduces him to Alcinous her father, who lands him in Ithaca : it is possible this might be true history ; the poet might build upon a real foundation, and only adorn the truth with the ornaments of poetry. It is to be wished, that a faithful history of the Trojan war, and the voyages of Ulysses, had been



With ready love her brothers gath'ring round, 5  
 Receiv'd the vestures, and the mules unbound.  
 She seeks the bridal bow'r: a matron there  
 The rising fire supplies with busy care,  
 Whose charms in youth her father's heart inflam'd,  
 Now worn with age, Eurymedusa nam'd: 10

transmitted to posterity; it would have been the best comment upon the Iliad and Odyssey. We are not to look upon the poems of Homer as mere romances, but as true stories, heightened and beautified by poetry: thus the Iliad is built upon a real dissention, that happened in a real war between Greece and Troy; and the Odyssey upon the real voyages of Ulysses, and the disorders that happened through his absence in his own country. Nay, it is not impossible but that many of those incidents that seem most extravagant in Homer, might have an appearing truth, and be justified by the opinions, and mistaken credulity of those ages. What is there in all Homer more seemingly extravagant, than the story of the race of the Cyclops, with one broad eye in their foreheads? And yet, as Sir Walter Raleigh very judiciously conjectures, this may be built upon a seeming truth: they were a people of Sicily remarkable for savageness and cruelty, and perhaps might in their wars make use of a head-piece or vizor, which had but one sight in it, and this might give occasion to sailors who coasted those shores to mistake the single sight of the vizor, for a broad eye in the forehead, especially when they before looked upon them as monsters for their barbarity. I doubt not but we lose many beauties in Homer for want of a real history, and think him extravagant, when he only complies with the opinions of former ages. I thought it necessary to make this observation, as a general vindication of Homer, especially in this place, immediately before he enters upon a relation of those stories which have been thought most to outrage credibility: if then we look upon the Odyssey as all fiction, we consider it unworthily; it ought to be read as a story founded upon truth, but adorned with the embellishments of poetry, to convey instruction with pleasure the more effectually.

v. 10. ——— *Eurymedusa nam'd.*] Eustathius remarks, that the Phæacians were people of great commerce, and that it was customary in those ages to exchange slaves in traffic; or perhaps Eurymedusa might be a captive, piracy then being honourable, and such seizures of cattle or slaves frequent. The passage concerning the brothers of Nausicaa has not escaped the censure of the critics: Homer in the original calls them "like gods," and yet in the same breath gives them the employment of slaves, they unyoke the mules, and carry into the palace the burdens they brought. A two-fold answer may be given to this objection, and this conduct might proceed from the general custom of the age, which



The captive dame Phæacian rovers bore,  
 Snatch'd from Epirus, her sweet native shore,  
 (A grateful prize) and in her bloom bestow'd.  
 On good Alcinous, honour'd as a god:  
 Nurse of Nauficæa from her infant years,  
 And tender second to a mother's cares.

Now from the sacred thicket where he lay,  
 To town Ulysses took the winding way.  
 Propitious Pallas, to secure her care,  
 Around him spread a veil of thicken'd air;

made such actions reputable; or from the particular love the brothers bore their sister, which might induce them to act thus, as an instance of it.

v. 20. *Around him spread a veil of thicken'd air.*] It may be asked what occasion there is to make Ulysses invisible? Eustathius answers, not only to preserve him from insults as he was a stranger, but that he might raise a greater surprise in Alcinous by his sudden appearance. But, adds he, the whole is an allegory; and Ulysses wisely chusing the evening to enter unobserved, gave occasion to the poet to bring in the goddess of wisdom to make him invisible.

Virgil has borrowed this passage from Homer, and Venus renders Æneas invisible in the same manner as Minerva Ulysses. Scaliger compares the two authors, and prefers Virgil infinitely before Homer, in the fifth book of his Poetics.

“ At Venus obscuro gradientes aere sepsit,  
 “ Et multo nebulæ circum Dea fudit amictu;  
 “ Cernere ne quis eos, neu quis contingere posset,  
 “ Molirive moram, aut veniendi poscere causas.”

Scaliger says the verses are more sonorous than Homer's, and that it was more necessary to make Æneas invisible than Ulysses, he being amongst a perfidious nation. But was not the danger as great from the rudeness of the Phæacians, as from the perfidiousness of the Carthaginians? Besides, Virgil does not mention the perfidiousness of the Carthaginians; so that it is the reason of Scaliger, not Virgil: and whether the verses be more sonorous, is submitted to the ear of the reader. He is chiefly delighted with

“ Et multo nebulæ circum Dea fudit amictu.”

“ Qui solus versus,” says he, “ deterreat Græcos ab ea sententia, quâ suum contendunt præferendum,” He allows *Κεχρομένης τ' ἐπείεσσι*, &c. to be a tolerable smooth verse, “ Commodus & rasilis,” but yet far inferior to this of Virgil;

“ Molirive moram, & veniendi poscere causas.”



To shun th' encounter of the vulgar croud,  
 Insulting still, inquisitive and loud.  
 When near the fam'd Phæacian walls he drew,  
 The beauteous city opening to his view,  
 His step a virgin met, and stood before: 25  
 A polish'd urn the seeming virgin bore,  
 And youthful smil'd; but in the low disguise  
 Lay hid the goddess with the azure eyes.

Show me, fair daughter, (thus the chief demands)  
 The house of him who rules these happy lands. 30  
 Thro' many woes and wand'rings, lo! I come  
 To good Alcinous' hospitable dome.  
 Far from my native coast, I rove alone,  
 A wretched stranger, and of all unknown!

The goddess answer'd. Father, I obey, 35  
 And point the wand'ring traveller his way:  
 Well known to me the palace you inquire,  
 For fast beside it dwells my honour'd fire;  
 But silent march, nor greet the common train  
 With question needless, or enquiry vain. 40  
 A race of rugged mariners are these;  
 Unpolish'd men, and boistrous as their seas:

It is but justice to lay the verses of Homer before the reader.

Καὶ τότε Ὀδυσσεὺς ὤρτο πόλιν δ' ἵμεν', ἀμφὶ δ' Ἀθήνη  
 Πολλὴν ἥερα χεῦε, φίλα φρονέεισ' Ὀδυσῆϊ.  
 Μῆτις φαίηκων μελαθύμων, ἀνίλοισιν  
 Κερτομένοισι τ' ἐπέεσσιν, καὶ ἐξερίοισι ὅτις εἴη.

I determine not which author has the greater beauty, but undoubtedly Homer is more happy in the occasion of the fiction than Virgil: Homer drew his description from the wisdom of Ulysses in entering the town in the evening, he was really invisible to the Phæacians, and Homer only heightened the truth by poetry; but Virgil is more bold, and has no such circumstance to justify his relation; for Æneas went into Carthage in the open day.

v. 26. ——— [the seeming virgin, &c.] It may be asked why Minerva does not appear as a goddess, but in a borrowed form? The poet has already told us, that she dreaded the wrath of Neptune; one deity could not openly oppose another, and therefore she acts invisibly.



The native islanders alone their care,  
And hateful he that breathes a foreign air.

These did the ruler of the deep ordain 45

To build proud navies, and command the main;

On canvas wings to cut the wat'ry way;

No bird so light, no thought so swift as they.

Thus having spoke, th' unknown celestial leads:

The footsteps of the deity he treads, 50

And secret moves along the crowded space,

Unseen of all the rude Phæacian race.

(So Pallas order'd, Pallas to their eyes

The mist objected, and condens'd the skies.)

v. 47. *On canvas wings to cut the wat'ry way.*] This circumstance is not inserted without a good effect: it could not but greatly encourage Ulysses to understand that he was arrived amongst a people that excelled in navigation; this gave him a prospect of being speedily conveyed to his own country, by the assistance of a nation so expert in maritime affairs. Eustathius.

v. 53. ——— *Pallas to their eyes the mist condenses.*] Scaliger in his Poetics calls this an impertinent repetition, and commends Virgil for not imitating it, for Homer dwells upon it no less than three times; and indeed one would almost imagine that Virgil was of the same opinion, for he has followed the turn of this whole passage, and omitted this repetition: yet he treads almost step by step in the path of Homer, and Æneas and Ulysses are drawn in the same colours;

“Miratur molem Æneas, magalia quondam:

“Miratur portas, strepitumque & strata viarum.”

Θαύμαζεν δ' Ὀδυσσεὺς λιμένας, καὶ νῆας εἰσας,

Αὐτῶντ' Ἠρώων ἀγορὰς, καὶ τείχεα μακρὰ,

Ἵψηλὰ, Κολόπεσσιν ἀρηρότα.

Homer poetically inserts the topography of this city of the Phæacians: though they were an unwarlike people, yet they understand the art of fortification; their city is surrounded with a strong wall, and that wall guarded with palisades. But whence this caution, since Homer tells us in the preceding book, that they were in no danger of an enemy? It might arise from their very fears, which naturally suggest to cowards, that they cannot be too safe; this would make them practise the art of fortification more assiduously than a more brave people, who usually put more confidence in valour than in walls, as was the practice of the Spartans.



The chief with wonder sees th' extended streets, 55  
 The spreading harbours, and the riding fleets;  
 He next their princes lofty domes admires,  
 In sep'rate islands crown'd with rising spires;  
 And deep intrenchments, and high walls of stone,  
 That gird the city like a marble zone. 60

At length the kingly palace gates he view'd:  
 There stopp'd the goddess, and her speech renew'd.

My task is done; the mansion you inquire  
 Appears before you: enter, and admire.  
 High-thron'd, and feasting, there thou shalt behold 65  
 The sceptred rulers. Fear not, but be bold:

A decent boldness ever meets with friends,  
 Succeeds, and ev'n a stranger recommends.

First to the queen prefer a suppliant's claim,  
 Alcinous' queen, Arete is her name, 70

The same her parents, and her pow'r the same.  
 For know, from ocean's god Nausithous sprung,  
 And Peribæa, beautiful and young:

(Eurymedon's last hope, who rul'd of old  
 The race of giants, impious, proud, and bold; 75

v. 63. *My task is done, &c.*] As deities ought not to be introduced without a necessity, so, when introduced, they ought to be employed in acts of importance, and worthy of their divinity: it may be asked if Homer observes this rule in his episode, where a goddess seems to appear only to direct Ulysses to the palace of Alcinous, which, as he himself tells us, a child could have done? But the chief design of Minerva was to advise Ulysses in his present exigencies: and (as Eustathius remarks) she opens her speech to him with great and noble sentiments. She informs him how to win the favour of Alcinous, upon which depends the whole happiness of our hero; and by which she brings about his re-establishment in his kingdom, the aim of the whole *Odyssey*. Virgil makes use of the same method in his *Æneis*, and Venus there executes the same office for her son, as Minerva for her favourite, in some degree as a guide, but chiefly as a counsellor.

v. 74. *Eurymedon, &c.*] This passage is worthy observation, as it discovers to us the time when the race of the ancient giants perished; this Eurymedon was grandfather to Nausithous, the father of Alcinous; so that the giants were extirpated forty or fifty years



Perish'd the nation in unrighteous war,  
 Perish'd the prince, and left this only heir.)  
 Who now by Neptune's am'rous pow'r compress'd,  
 Produc'd a monarch that his people blest,  
 Father and prince of the Phæacian name; 80  
 From him Rhexenor and Alcinous came.  
 'The first by Phœbus' burning arrows fir'd,  
 New from his nuptials, hapless youth! expir'd.  
 No son surviv'd: Arete heir'd his state,  
 And her, Alcinous chose his royal mate. 85  
 With honours yet to womankind unknown,  
 This queen he graces, and divides the throne:  
 In equal tendernefs her sons conspire,  
 And all the children emulate their fire.  
 When thro' the street she gracious deigns to move, 90  
 (The public wonder, and the public love)

before the war of Troy. This exactly agrees with ancient story, which informs us, that Hercules and Theseus purged the earth from those monsters. Plutarch in his life of Theseus tells us, that they were men of great strength, and public robbers, one of whom was called the "Bender of pines." Now Theseus stole away Helen in her infancy, and consequently these giants were destroyed some years before the Trojan expedition. Dacier, Plutarch.

v. 84, &c. *Arete.*] It is observable that this Arete was both wife and niece to Alcinous, an instance that the Grecians married with such near relations: the same appears from Demosthenes and other Greek orators. But what then is the notion of incest amongst the ancients? The collateral branch was not thought incestuous, for Juno was the wife and sister of Jupiter. Brothers likewise married their brothers wives, as Deiphobus Helen, after the death of Paris: the same was practised amongst the Jews, and consequently being permitted by Moses was not incestuous. So that the only incest was in the ascending, not collateral or descending branch; as when parents and children married; thus when Myrrha lay with her father, and Lot with his daughters, this was accounted incest. The reason is very evident, a child cannot pay the duty of a child to a parent, and at the same time of a wife or husband; nor can a father act with the authority of a father towards a person who is at once his wife and daughter. The relations interfere, and introduce confusion, where the law of nature and reason requires regularity.



The tongues of all with transport sound her praise,  
 The eyes of all, as on a goddess, gaze.  
 She feels the triumph of a gen'rous breast;  
 To heal divisions, to relieve th' oppress'd;  
 In virtue rich; in blessing others, blest.  
 Go then secure, thy humble suit prefer,  
 And owe thy country and thy friends to her.

95 }

With that the goddess deign'd no longer stay,  
 But o'er the world of waters wing'd her way: 100  
 Forfaking Scheria's ever-pleasing shore,  
 The winds to Marathon the virgin bore;  
 Thence, where proud Athens rears her tow'ry head,  
 With opening streets and shining structures spread,  
 She past, delighted with the well known seats; 105  
 And to Erechtheus' sacred dome retreats.

Meanwhile Ulysses at the palace waits,  
 There stops, and anxious with his soul debates,  
 Fix'd in amaze before the royal gates.

}

v. 95. *To heal divisions, &c.*] This office of Arete has been looked upon as somewhat extraordinary, that she should decide the quarrels of the subjects, a province more proper for Alcinous; and therefore the ancients endeavoured to soften it by different readings; and instead of οἷσιν τ' εὐφρονηήσι, they inserted ἡσιν τ' εὐφρονοίσι, or "she decides amongst women." Eustathius in the text reads it in a third way, ἡσιν τ' εὐφροσύνησι, or "by her wisdom." Spondanus believes, that the queen had a share in the government of the Phæacians; but Eustathius thinks the poet intended to set the character of Arete in a fair point of light, she bearing the chief part in this book, and a great share in the sequel of the Odyssey; by this method he introduces her to the best advantage, and makes her a person of importance, and worthy to have a place in heroic poetry: and indeed he has given her a very amiable character.

v. 109. *Fix'd in amaze before the royal gates.*] The poet here opens a very agreeable scene, and describes the beauty of the palace and gardens of Alcinous. Diodorus Siculus adapts this passage to the island Taprobane, Justin Martyr to paradise; Τῇ Παραδείσῳ δὲ εἰκόνα τὸν Ἀλκινόου κῆπον ζωρεῖν πεποίηκε. He transcribes this whole passage into his Apology, but with some variation from the common editions, for instead of

————— ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἰεὶ

ξεφυρὴ πνεύσασα, ————— he reads,

ἀλλ' αἰεὶ αὖρε ξεφυρῆ, &c. perhaps more elegantly.



The front appear'd with radiant splendours gay, 110  
 Bright as the lamp of night, or orb of day,  
 The walls were massy brags: the cornice high  
 Blue metals crown'd, in colours of the sky:  
 Rich plates of gold the folding doors incase;  
 The pillars silver, on a brazen base; 115  
 Silver the lintals deep-projecting o'er,  
 And gold, the ringlets that command the door.  
 Two rows of stately dogs, on either hand,  
 In sculptur'd gold and labour'd silver stand.

Eustathius observes that Homer suits his poetry to the things he relates, for in the whole Iliad there is not a description of this nature, nor an opportunity to introduce it in a poem that represents nothing but objects of terrour and blood. The poet himself seems to go a little out of the way to bring it into the Odyssey; for it has no necessary connection with the poem, nor would it be less perfect if it had been omitted; but as Mercury, when he surveyed the bower of Calypso, ravished with the beauty of it, stood a while in a still admiration: so Homer, delighted with the scenes he draws, stands still a few moments, and suspends the story of the poem, to enjoy the beauties of these gardens of Alcinous. But even here he shews his judgment, in not letting his fancy run out into a long description: he concludes the whole in the compass of twenty verses, and resumes the thread of his story. Rapin, I confess, censures this description of the gardens: he calls it puerile and too light for eloquence, that it is spun out to too great a length, and is somewhat affected, has no due coherence with, nor bears a just proportion to, the whole, by reason of its being too glittering. This is spoken with too great severity: it is necessary to relieve the mind of the reader sometimes with gayer scenes, that it may proceed with a fresh appetite to the succeeding entertainment. In short, if it be a fault, it is a beautiful fault; and Homer may be said here, as he was upon another occasion by St. Augustin, to be "*dulcissimè vanus*." The admiration of the gold and silver is no blemish to Ulysses: for, as Eustathius remarks, it proceeds not out of avarice, but from the beauty of the work, and usefulness and magnificence of the buildings. The whole description, continues he, suits the character of the Phæacians, a proud, luxurious people, delighted with shew and ostentation.

v. 118. *Two rows of stately dogs, &c.*] We have already seen that dogs were kept as a piece of state, from the instance of those that attended Telemachus: here Alcinous has images of dogs in gold, for the ornament of his palace; Homer animates them in his poetry; but to soften the description, he introduces Vulcan,



These Vulcan form'd, with art divine, to wait 120  
 Immortal guardians at Alcinous' gate;  
 Alive each animated frame appears,  
 And still to live beyond the pow'r of years.  
 Fair thrones within from space to space were rais'd,  
 Where various carpets with embroidery blaz'd, 125  
 The work of matrons: these the princes prest,  
 Day following day, a long continu'd feast.  
 Refulgent pedestals the walls surround,  
 Which boys of gold with flaming torches crown'd;

and ascribes the wonder to the power of a god. If we take the poetical dress away, the truth is, that these dogs were formed with such excellent art, that they seemed to be alive, and Homer by a liberty allowable to poetry describes them as really having that life, which they only have in appearance. In the Iliad he speaks of living tripods with great boldness. Eustathius recites another opinion of some of the ancients, who thought these *Κύνες* not to be animals, but a kind of large nails (*ἥλας*) or pins, made use of in buildings, and to this day the name is retained by builders, as dogs of iron, &c. It is certain the words will bear this interpretation, but the former is more after the spirit of Homer, and more noble in poetry. Besides, if the latter were intended, it would be absurd to ascribe a work of so little importance to a deity.

v. 124. *Fair thrones within, &c.*] The poet does not say of what materials these thrones were made, whether of gold or silver, to avoid the imputation of being thought fabulous in his description; it being almost incredible, remarks Eustathius, that such quantities of gold and silver could be in the possession of such a king as Alcinous; though, if we consider that his people were greatly given to navigation, the relation may come within the bounds of credibility.

v. 128. *Refu'gent pedestals the walls surround,  
 Which boys of gold with flaming torches crown'd.*]

This is a remarkable piece of grandeur: lamps, as appears from the eighteenth of the Odyssey, were not at this time known to the Grecians, but only torches: these were held by images in the shape of beautiful youths, and those images were of gold. Lucretius has translated these verses.

“ ——— Aurea sunt juvenum simulacra per ædeis,

“ Lampades igniferas manibus retinentia dextris,

“ Lumina nocturnis epulis ut supeditentur.”



The polish'd ore, reflecting ev'ry ray, 130  
 Blaz'd on the banquets with a double day.  
 Full fifty handmaids form the household train;  
 Some turn the mill, or sift the golden grain;  
 Some ply the loom; their busy fingers move  
 Like poplar-leaves when Zephyr fans the grove. 135  
 Not more renown'd the men of Scheria's isle,  
 For failing arts and all the naval toil,

It is admirable to observe with what propriety Homer adapts his poetry to the characters of his persons: Nestor is a wise man; when he is first seen in the *Odyssey*, it is at a sacrifice, and there is not the least appearance of pomp or luxury in his palace or entertainments. The Phæacians are of an opposite character, and the poet describes them consistently with it; they are all along a proud, idle, effeminate people; though such a pompous description would have ill suited the wise Nestor, it excellently agrees with the vain Alcinous.

v. 135. *Like poplar-leaves when Zephyr fans the grove.*] There is some obscurity in this short allusion, and some refer it to the work, others to the damsels employed in work: Eustathius is of the opinion that it alludes to the damsels, and expresses the quick and continued motion of their hands: I have followed this interpretation, and think that Homer intended to illustrate that quick and intermingled motion, by comparing them to the branches of a poplar agitated by winds, all at once in motion, some bending this, some that way. The other interpretations are more forced, and less intelligible.

v. 107. [*Of the original.*]

Καιροσέων δ' ὀθονέων ἀπολείβεσαι ὑγρὸν ἔλαιον.]

This passage is not without difficulty; some of the ancients understood it to signify the thickness and closeness of the texture, which was so compactly wrought that oil could not penetrate it; others thought it expressed the smoothness and softness of it, as if oil seemed to flow from it; or lastly, that it shone with such a glossy colour as looked like oil. Dacier renders the verse according to the opinion first recited.

So close the work, that oil diffus'd in vain  
 Glides off innoxious and without a stain.

Any of these interpretations make the passage intelligible (though I think the description does better without it.) It is left to the judgment of the reader which to prefer; they are all to be found in Eustathius.



Than works of female skill their women's pride,  
 The flying shuttle thro' the threads to guide :  
 Pallas to these her double gifts imparts,  
 Inventive genius, and industrious arts.

140

Close to the gates a spacious garden lies,  
 From storms defended and inclement skies.

v. 138. — — *works of female skill their women's pride.*] We may gather from what Homer here relates concerning the skill of these Phæacian damsels, that they were famed for these works of curiosity: the Corcyrians were much given to traffic, and perhaps they might bring slaves from the Sidonians, who instructed them in these manufactures. Dacier.

v. 142. *Close to the gates a spacious garden lies.*] This famous garden of Alcinous contains no more than four acres of ground, which in those times of simplicity was thought a large one even for a prince. It is laid out as Eustathius observes, into three parts: a grove for fruits and shade, a vineyard, and an allotment for olives and herbs. It is watered with two fountains, the one supplies the palace and town, the other the garden and the flowers. But it may be asked what reality there is in the relation, and whether any trees bear fruit all the year in this island? Eustathius observes, that experience teaches the contrary, and that it is only true of the greatest part of the year; Homer, adds he, disguises the true situation of the Phæacians, and here describes it as one of the happy islands; at once to enrich his poetry, and to avoid a discovery of his poetical exaggeration. The relation is true of other places, if Pliny and Theophrastus deserve credit, as Dacier observes; thus the citron bears during the whole year fruits and flowers. “Arbos ipsa omnibus horis pomifera, aliis cadentibus, aliis maturescentibus, aliis vero subnascentibus.” The same is related of other trees by Pliny: “Novusque fructus in his cum annotino pendet;” he affirms the like of the pine, “Habet fructum maturescentem, habet proximo anno ad maturitatem, venturum, ac deinde tertio,” &c. So that what Homer relates is in itself true, though not entirely of Phæacia. Or perhaps it might be only intended for a more beautiful and poetical manner of describing the constant succession of one fruit after another in a fertile climate.

— — — — Figs on figs arise.

Aristotle applied this hemestic scoffingly to the sycophants of Athens: he was about to leave that city upon its rejoicing at the death of Socrates: and, quoting this verse, he said he would not live in a place where

— — — — Γηράσκει σῦκον δ' ἐπὶ σῦκῳ.

alluding to the derivation of the word sycophant. Eustathius.



Four acres was th' allotted space of ground,  
 Fenc'd with a green enclosure all around, 145  
 Tall thriving trees confests'd the fruitful mould;  
 The red'ning apple ripens here to gold.  
 Here the blue fig with luscious juice o'erflows,  
 With deeper red the full pomegranate glows,  
 The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear, 150  
 And verdant olives flourish round the year.  
 The balmy spirit of the western gale  
 Eternal breathes on fruits untaught to fail:  
 Each dropping pear a following pear supplies,  
 On apples apples, figs on figs arise: 155  
 The same mild season gives the blooms to blow,  
 The buds to harden, and the fruits to grow.  
 Here order'd vines in equal ranks appear,  
 With all th' united labours of the year;

Some dry the black'ning clusters in the sun.

To understand this passage aright, it is necessary to know the manner of ordering the vintage amongst the Greeks. First, they carried all the grapes they gathered into a house for a season; afterwards they exposed them ten days to the sun, and let them lie abroad as many nights in the freshness of the air; then they kept them five days in cool shades, and on the sixth they trod them, and put the wine into vessels. This we learn from Hesiod: *ἔρπον*, v. 229.

Πάντας ἀπόδρεπε οἴκαδε βότρυς  
 Δείξαι δ' ἡελίῳ δέκα τ' ἡμέαια καὶ δέκα νύκτας  
 Πέντε δὲ ζυγκιάσαι, ἔκλῳ δ' εἰς ἄλγε' ἀφύσσαι  
 Δῶρα Διωνύσῃ πολυσηθέῃ. —

Homer distinguishes the whole into three orders: first, the grapes that have already been exposed to the sun are trod; the second order is of the grapes that are exposed, while the others are treading; and the third, of those that are ripe to be gathered, while the others are thus ordering. Homer himself thus explains it, by saying, that while some vines were loaded with black and mature grapes, others were green, or but just turning to blackness. Homer undoubtedly founds this poetical relation upon observing some vines that bore fruit thrice annually. Pliny affirms this to be true, lib. xvi. cap. 27. "Vites quidem & triferæ sunt, quas ob id insanas vocant, quoniam in iis aliæ, maturescunt, aliæ turgescunt, aliæ florent." Dacier.



Some to unload the fertile branches run, 160

Some dry the black'ning clusters in the sun,

Others to tread the liquid harvest join,

The groaning presses foam with floods of wine.

Here are the vines in early flow'r defcry'd,

Here grapes discolour'd on the sunny side, 165

And there in autumn's richest purple dy'd.

Beds of all various herbs, for ever green,

In beauteous order terminate the scene.

Two plenteous fountains the whole prospect crown'd;

This thro' the gardens leads its streams around, 170

Visits each plant, and waters all the ground:

While that in pipes beneath the palace flows,

And thence its current on the town bestows;

To various use their various streams they bring,

The people one, and one supplies the king. 175

Such were the glories which the gods ordain'd,

To grace Alcinous, and his happy land.

Ev'n from the chief, who men and nations knew,

Th' unwonted scene surprise and rapture drew;

In pleasing thought he ran the prospect o'er, 180

Then hasty enter'd at the lofty door.

Night now approaching, in the palace stand,

With goblets crown'd, the rulers of the land;

Prepar'd for rest, and off'ring to the \* god

Who bears the virtue of the sleepy rod. 185

Unseen he glided through the joyous croud,

With darkness circled, and an ambient cloud.

\* Mercury.

v. 184. *Prepar'd for rest, and off'ring to the god  
Who bears the virtue of the sleepy rod.]*

I have already explained from Athenæus this custom of offering to Mercury at the conclusion of entertainments: he was thought by the ancients to preside over sleep: "Dat somnos adimitque," according to Horace, as Dacier observes. In following ages this practice was altered, and they offered not to Mercury, but to Jove the Perfecter, or to  $\Sigma\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma\ \tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\epsilon\iota\omicron\varsigma$ .



Direct to great Alcinous' throne he came,  
 And prostrate fell before th' imperial dame.  
 Then from around him dropp'd the veil of night; 190  
 Sudden he shines, and manifest to fight.  
 The nobles gaze, with awful fear oppress'd;  
 Silent they gaze, and eye the god-like guest.

Daughter of great Rhexenor! (thus began  
 Low at her knees, the much-induring man) 195  
 To thee, thy consort, and this royal train,  
 To all that share the blessings of your reign,  
 A suppliant bends : oh pity human woe!  
 'Tis what the happy to th' unhappy owe.  
 A wretched exile to his country send, 200  
 Long worn with griefs, and long without a friend.

v. 190. *Then from around him dropp'd the veil of night.*] If this whole story of the veil of air had been told simply and nakedly, it would imply no more than that Ulysses arrived without being discovered; and the breaking of the veil denotes his first coming into sight, in the presence of the queen. But Homer steps out of the vulgar road of an historian, and clothes it with a sublimity worthy of heroic poetry. In the same manner Virgil discovers his Æneas to Dido :

“ ————— Cum circumfusa repente  
 “ Scindit se nubes, & in aera purgat apertum.”

Scaliger prefers these verses to those of Homer, and perhaps with good reason; he calls the last part of the second verse a divine addition; and indeed it is far more beautiful than the *δέσφαλ' ἄνδ' ὄν' ἄνδ' ὄν'* of Homer.

v. 196. *To thee, thy consort, and this royal train.*] Minerva commanded Ulysses to supplicate the queen : why then does he exceed the directions of the goddess, and not only address himself to Alcinous, but to the rest of the assembly? Spondanus answers, that Ulysses adapts himself to the present circumstances, and seeing the king and other peers in the same assembly, he thought it improper not to take notice of them : he therefore addresses himself to all, that he may make all his friends. But then does not Minerva give improper directions? and is not Ulysses more wise than the goddess of wisdom? The true reason therefore may perhaps be, that Ulysses really complies with the injunctions of the goddess : she commands him to address himself to the queen : and he does so : this I take to mean chiefly or primarily, but not exclusively of the king : if the passage be thus understood, it solves the objection.

v. 200. *A wretched exile to his country send.*] Ulysses here speaks very concisely : and he may seem to break abruptly into the subject



So may the gods your better days increase,  
 And all your joys descend on all your race,  
 So reign for ever on your country's breast,  
 Your people blessing, by your people blest! 205

Then to the genial hearth he bow'd his face,  
 And humbled in the ashes took his place.  
 Silence ensu'd. The eldest first began,  
 Echeneus sage, a venerable man!

of his petition, without letting the audience either into the knowledge of his condition or person. Was this a proper method to prevail over an assembly of strangers? But his gesture spoke for him, he threw himself into the posture of a suppliant, and the persons of all suppliants were esteemed to be sacred: he declared himself to be a man in calamity, and reserves his story to be told more at large, when the surprise of the Phæacians at the sudden appearance of a stranger was over; this conciseness therefore is not blameable, but rather an instance of Homer's judgment, who knows when to be short, and when to be copious.

207. *And humbled in the ashes took his place.*] This was the custom of suppliants; they betook themselves to the hearth as sacred, and a place of refuge. It was particularly in the protection of Vesta: thus Tully, lib. ii. de Naturâ Deorum; "Nomen vestæ sumptum est a Græcis, ea est enim quæ illis ἑστία dicitur, jusque ejus ad aras, & focos pertinet." Apollonius likewise, as Spondanus observes, takes notice of this custom of suppliants.

Τὸ δ' ἄνεω, καὶ ἀναυδοί, ἐφ' ἑστίῃ ἀίξαντες  
 ἱζανον, ἥτε δίκην λυτροῖς ἐκέτησι τέτυκται.

That is, they betook themselves to the hearth, and there sat mute, which is the custom of all unhappy suppliants. If it was a custom, as Apollonius observes, to sit mute, this gives another reason why Ulysses used but few words in his supplication: he had greatly outraged a practice that was established as sacred amongst the Greeks, and had not acted in the character of a suppliant, if he had lanced out into a long oration.

This was the most sure and effectual way of supplication; thus when Themistocles fled to Admetus king of the Molossians, he placed himself before the hearth, and was received, though that king had formerly vowed his destruction. Plutarch indeed calls it an unusual way of supplication, but that proceeded from his carrying a child in his arms to move the greater compassion, not from his throwing himself into the protection of the household gods.

v. 209. *Echeneus sage, &c.*] The expression in the original, as Dacier observes, is remarkable: "Echeneus an old man, who knew many ancient, and great variety of things;" he was wise



Whose well-taught mind the present age surpass, 210  
And join'd to that th' experience of the last.  
Fit words attended on his weighty sense,  
And mild persuasion flow'd in eloquence.

Oh sight (he cry'd) dishonest and unjust !  
A guest, a stranger, seated in the dust ! 215  
To raise the lowly suppliant from the ground  
Befits a monarch. Lo ! the peers around  
But wait thy word, the gentle guest to grace,  
And seat him fair in some distinguish'd place.  
Let first the herald due libation pay 220  
To Jove, who guides the wand'rer on his way ;  
Then set the genial banquet in his view,  
And give the stranger-guest a stranger's due.

His sage advice the list'ning king obeys,  
He stretch'd his hand the prudent chief to raise, 225  
And from his seat Laodamas remov'd,  
(The monarch's offspring, and his best lov'd)  
There next his side the god-like hero sat ;  
With stars of silver shone the bed of state.  
The golden ew'r a beauteous handmaid brings, 230  
Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs,  
Whose polish'd vase with copious streams supplies  
A silver laver, of capacious size.  
The table next in regal order spread,  
The glitt'ring canisters are heap'd with bread : 235  
Viands of various kinds invite the taste,  
Of choicest sort and favour, rich repast !

by long experience, and by being conversant in ancient story : the author of the book of Wisdom speaks almost in the same expressions : " Scit præterita & de futuris æstimat."

v. 226. *And from his seat Laodamas remov'd.*] Plutarch in his *Symposiacs* discusses a question, whether the master of the feast should place his guests, or let them seat themselves promiscuously : he there commends this conduct of Alcinous, as an instance of a courteous disposition and great humanity, who gave a place of dignity to a stranger and suppliant.



Thus feasting high, Alcinous gave the sign,  
 And bade the herald pour the rosy wine.  
 Let all around the due libation pay 240  
 To Jove, who guides the wand'rer on his way.

He said. Pontonus heard the king's command;  
 The circling goblet moves from hand to hand:  
 Each drinks the juice that glads the heart of man  
 Alcinous then, with aspect mild, began. 245

Princes and peers, attend! while we impart  
 To you, the thoughts of no inhuman heart.  
 Now pleas'd and satiate from the social rite  
 Repair we to the blessings of the night:  
 But with the rising day, assembled here, 250  
 Let all th' elders of the land appear,

Pious observe our hospitable laws,  
 And heav'n propitiate in the stranger's cause:  
 Then join'd in council, proper means explore  
 Safe to transport him to the wisht-for shore: 255  
 (How distant that, imports not us to know,  
 Nor weigh the labour, but relieve the woe)  
 Meantime, nor harm nor anguish let him bear:  
 This interval, heav'n trusts him to our care;  
 But to his native land our charge resign'd, 260  
 Heav'n's is his life to come, and all the woes behind.  
 Then must he suffer what the fates ordain;  
 For fate has wove the thread of life with pain,  
 And twins ev'n from the birth, are misery and man! }

But if descended from th' Olympian bow'r, 265  
 Gracious approach us some immortal pow'r;

v. 240. ——— the due libation pay  
 To Jove ———]

We have already seen that the whole assembly was about to pour libations to Mercury; whence is it then that they now offer to Jupiter? Eustathius observes, it was because of the arrival of this stranger, and Jupiter presides over all strangers, and is frequently called Ζεύς ξένιος, and Ζεύς ἐστιάχης.



If in that form thou com'st a guest divine:  
 Some high event the conscious gods design.  
 As yet, unbid they never grac'd our feast,  
 The solemn sacrifice call'd down the guest; 270  
 Then manifest of heav'n the vision stood,  
 And to our eyes familiar was the god,  
 Oft with some favour'd traveller they stray,  
 And shine before him all the desert way:  
 With social intercourse, and face to face, 275  
 The friends and guardians of our pious race.  
 So near approach we their celestial kind,  
 By justice, truth, and probity of mind;  
 As our dire neighbours of Cyclopæan birth,  
 Match in fierce wrong, the giant-sons of earth. 280

v. 277. *So near approach we their celestial kind, &c.]* There is some intricacy in this passage, and much labour has been used to explain it. Some would have it to imply, that "we are as nearly allied to the gods, as the Cyclops and giants, who are descended from them; and if the gods frequently appear to these giants who defy them; how much more may it be expected by the Phæacians to enjoy that favour, who reverence and adore them?" Eustathius explains it after another method; Alcinous had conceived a fixed hatred against the race of the Cyclops, who had expelled the Phæacians from their country, and forced them to seek a new habitation; he here expresses that hatred, and says, that the Phæacians resemble the gods as much in goodness, as the Cyclops and giants one the other in impiety: he illustrates it, by shewing that the expression has the same import as if we should say that Socrates comes as near to Plato in virtue, as Anytus and Melitus to one another in wickedness; and indeed the construction will be easy, by understanding Ἀλλήγοις in the second verse.

Σφίσιν ἐγγύθεν εἰμὲν,

"Ὡς περ κύκλωπές τε καὶ ὄγρηα φύλα γιγάντων.

Subaudi, ἐγγύθεν ἀλλήλοις εἰσιν.

I have already spoken of the presence of the gods at the sacrifices, in a former note upon the Odyssey: this frequent intercourse of the gods was agreeable to the theology of the ancients; but why then is Alcinous surprised at the appearance of Ulysses, whom he looks upon as a god, if such favours are frequent? Spondanus replies, that it is the unusualness of the time, not the appearance, that surprises Alcinous; the gods appeared either at their sacrifices, or in their journeys, and therefore he looks upon this visit as a thing extraordinary.



Let no such thought (with modest grace rejoin'd  
 The prudent Greek) possess the royal mind.  
 Alas! a mortal, like thyself, am I;  
 No glorious native of yon azure sky:  
 In form, ah how unlike their heav'nly kind? 285  
 How more inferior in the gifts of mind?  
 Alas, a mortal! most oppress'd of those  
 Whom fate has loaded with a weight of woes;  
 By a sad train of miseries alone  
 Distinguish'd long, and second now to none! 290  
 By heav'n's high will compell'd from shore to shore;  
 With heav'n's high will prepar'd to suffer more.  
 What histories of toil could I declare?  
 But still long-weary'd nature wants repair;  
 Spent with fatigue, and shrunk with pining fast, 295  
 My craving bowels still require repast.  
 Howe'er the noble, suffer'ing mind, may grieve  
 Its load of anguish, and disdain to live;  
 Necessity demands our daily bread;  
 Hunger is insolent; and will be fed. 300  
 But finish, oh ye peers! what you propose,  
 And let the morrow's dawn conclude my woes.  
 Pleas'd will I suffer all the gods ordain,  
 To see my soil, my son, my friends, again.  
 That view vouchsaf'd, let instant death surprise 305  
 With ever-during shade these happy eyes!

v. 305. *That view vouchsaf'd, let instant death, &c.*] It is very necessary to recall frequently to the reader's mind the desire Ulysses has to reach his own country; and to shew that he is absent not by choice, but necessity; all the disorders in his kingdom happen by reason of his absence: it is therefore necessary to set the desire of his return in the strongest point of light, that he may not seem accessory to those disorders, by being absent when it was in his power to return. It is observable that Ulysses does not here make any mention of Penelope, whom he scarce ever omits in other places, as one of the chief inducements to wish for his country; the reason of his silence, says Eustathius, is, because he is unwilling to abate the favour of Alcinous, by a discovery that would shew it was im-



Th' assembled peers with gen'ral praise approv'd  
His pleaded reason, and the suit he mov'd.

Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,

And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs.

310

Ulysses in the regal walls alone

Remain'd: beside him, on a splendid throne,

Divine Arete and Alcinous shone.

The queen, on nearer view, the guest survey'd

Rob'd in the garments her own hands had made; 315

Not without wonder seen. Then thus began,

Her words addressing to the god-like man.

Cam'st thou not hither, wondrous stranger! say,

From lands remote, and o'er a length of sea?

Tell then whence art thou? whence that princely air?

And robes like these, so recent and so fair!

321

Hard is the task, oh princess! you impose:

(Thus sighing spoke the man of many woes)

possible for him to marry his daughter; such a discovery might make the king proceed more coolly towards his transportation; whereas it would afterwards be less dangerous, when he has had an opportunity fully to engage him in his favour.

v. 322. *Hard is the task, oh princess!*] Æneas in Virgil speaks to Venus after the same manner, as Ulysses to Arete.

“O dea, si primâ repetens ab origine pergam,

“Et vacet annales nostrorum audire laborum,

“Ante diem clauso componet vesper Olympo.”

Scaliger observes that Virgil so far exceeds the verses of Homer, that they will not even bear a comparison; he is superiour almost in every word; for instance; he renders, *διηνεκέως*, by “*primâ ab origine*,” and adds the word “*vacet*” beautifully; and still more beautifully he translates *πολλὰ κήδεα*, “*annales nostrorum audire laborum*,” and lastly he paraphrases the word *ἀργαλέον* by a most harmonious line,

“Ante diem clauso componet vesper Olympo.”

Which excellently describes the multitude of the sufferings of Æneas, which could not be comprehended in the relation of a whole day.

I will not deny but that Virgil excels Homer in this and many other passages which he borrows from him: but then is it a just conclusion to infer, after the manner of Scaliger, that Virgil is a



The long, the mournful series to relate  
 Of all my sorrows, sent by heav'n and fate! 325  
 Yet what you ask, attend. An island lies  
 Beyond these tracts, and under other skies,  
 Ogygia named, in ocean's wat'ry arms:  
 Where dwells Calypso, dreadful in her charms!  
 Remote from gods or men she holds her rein, 330  
 Amid the terrours of the rolling main.

better poet than Homer? To conclude from particulars to generals is a false way of arguing. It is as if in a comparison of two persons, a man should from single features give a superiority of beauty, which is only to be gathered from the symmetry of the whole body.

v. 326. *Yet what you ask, attend.*—] Homer here gives a summary of the subject of the two preceding books: this recapitulation cannot indeed be avoided, because it is necessary to let Alcinous into his story, and this cannot be done without a repetition; but generally all repetitions are tedious: the reader is offended when that is related which he knows already: he receives no new instruction to entertain his judgment, nor any new descriptions to excite his curiosity, and by these means the very soul of poetry is extinguished, and it becomes unspirited and lifeless. When therefore repetitions are absolutely necessary, they ought always to be short; and I may appeal to the reader if he is not tired with many in Homer, especially when made in the very same words? Here indeed Ulysses tells his story but in part; the queen asked him who he was; but he passes over this without any reply, and reserves the greatest part of his story to a time of more leisure, that he may discover himself to a better advantage before the whole peerage of the Phæacians. I do not always condemn even the verbal repetitions of Homer; sometimes as in embassies they may be necessary, because every word is stamped with authority, and perhaps they might be customary in Homer's times; if they were not, he had too fruitful an invention not to have varied his thoughts and expressions. Bossu observes, that with respect to repetitions, Virgil is more exact than Homer; for instance, in the first book of the *Æneis*, when *Æneas* is repeating his sufferings to *Venus*, she interrupts him to give him comfort;

————— “Nec plura querentem  
 “Passa Venus, medio sic interfata dolore est.”

and in the third book, where good manners obliged this hero to relate his story at the request of *Andromache*, the poet prevents it by introducing *Helenus*, who hinders the repetition.

v. 330. *Remote from gods or men she holds her rein*] Homer has the secret art of introducing the best instructions, in the midst of the plainest narrations. He has described the unworthy passion of



Me, only me, the hand of fortune bore  
 Unblest! to tread that interdicted shore:  
 When Jove tremendous in the fable deeps  
 Lanch'd his red lightning at our scatter'd ships: 335  
 Then, all my fleet, and all my followers lost,  
 Sole on a plank, on boiling surges tost,  
 Heav'n drove my wreck th' Ogygian isle to find,  
 Full nine days floating to the wave and wind.  
 Met by the goddess there with open arms, 340  
 She brib'd my stay with more than human charms;  
 Nay promis'd, vainly promis'd, to bestow  
 Immortal life, exempt from age and woe.  
 But all her blandishments successless prove,  
 To banish from my breast my country's love. 345  
 I stay reluctant sev'n continu'd years,  
 And water her ambrosial couch with tears.  
 The eighth, she voluntary moves to part,  
 Or urg'd by Jove, or her own changeful heart.

the goddess Calypso, and the indecent advances she made to detain him from his country. It is possible this relation might make some impressions upon the mind of the reader, inconsistent with exact morality; what antidote then does Homer administer to expel this poison? he does not content himself with setting the chastity of Penelope in opposition to the loose desires of Calypso, and shewing the great advantage the mortal has over the goddess; but he here discovers the fountain from whence this weakness rises, by saying, that neither man nor gods frequented this island; on one hand the absence of the gods, and on the other the infrequency of objects, made her yield at the sight of the first that appears. Every object is dangerous in solitude, especially as Homer expresses it, if we have no commerce with the gods. Dacier.

v. 344. *But all her blandishments successless prove, —*] Dacier from Eustathius assigns the reason of the refusal of Ulysses to comply with the proffers of Calypso, to forsake his wife and country: it was, because he knew that women in love promise more than they either can, or intend to perform. An insinuation, that he would have complied if he had thought the goddess would, or could have performed her promises. But this is contrary to the character of Ulysses, whose greatest glory it is, not to have listened even to a goddess. In this view he ceases to be an hero, and his return is no longer a virtue, but he returns only because he found not a temptation sufficient to keep him from his country.



A raft was form'd to cross the furling sea; 350  
 Herself supply'd the stores and rich array;  
 And gave the gales to waft me on the way.  
 In sev'nteen days appear'd your pleasing coast,  
 And woody mountains half in vapours lost.  
 Joy touch'd my soul: my soul was joy'd in vain, 355  
 For angry Neptune rous'd the raging main;  
 The wild winds whistle, and the billows roar;  
 The splitting raft the furious tempest tore;  
 And storms vindictive intercept the shore.  
 Soon as their rage subsides, the seas I brave 360  
 With naked force, and shoot along the wave,  
 To reach this isle: but there my hopes were lost,  
 The surge impell'd me on a craggy coast.  
 I chose the safer sea, and chanc'd to find  
 A river's mouth impervious to the wind, 365  
 And clear of rocks. I fainted by the flood;  
 Then took the shelter of the neighb'ring wood.  
 'Twas night; and cover'd in the foliage deep,  
 Jove plung'd my senses in the death of sleep.  
 All night I slept, oblivious of my pain: 370  
 Aurora dawn'd, and Phœbus shin'd in vain,  
 Nor 'till oblique he stop'd his ev'ning ray,  
 Had Somnus dry'd the balmy dew away.  
 Then female voices from the shore I heard:  
 A maid amidst them, goddess-like, appear'd: 375  
 To her I su'd, she pity'd my distress;  
 Like thee in beauty, nor in virtue less.  
 Who from such youth cou'd hope confid'rate care?  
 In youth and beauty wisdom is but rare!

v. 379. *In youth and beauty wisdom is but rare!*] In the preceding line Ulysses speaks of Nausicaa, yet immediately changes the words into the masculine gender, for grammatically it ought to be *ἥτις* *ἀνδράσδεσσιν*. Homer makes this alteration to pay the greater compliment to Nausicaa, and he intends to express by it, that neither woman nor man of her years could be expected to have such remarkable discretion, Eustathius.



She gave me life, reliev'd with just supplies 380

My wants, and lent these robes that strike your eyes.

This is the truth : and oh ye pow'rs on high !

Forbid that want should sink me to a lye.

To this the king. Our daughter but exprest

Her cares imperfect to our god-like guest. 385

Suppliant to her, since first he chose to pray,

Why not herself did she conduct the way,

And with her handmaids to our court convey ?

Hero and king ! (Ulysses thus reply'd)

Nor blame her faultless, nor suspect of pride : 390

Such sentences being very frequent in the *Odyssey* ; it may not be improper to observe, of what beauty a sentence is in epic poetry. A sentence may be defined, a moral instruction couched in a few words. Rapin asserts, that sentences are more proper in dramatic than heroic poetry : for narration is the essential character of it, and it ought to be one continued thread of discourse, simple and natural, without an affectation of figures, or moral reflections : that energy which some pretend to collect and inclose within a small compass of words, is wont extremely to weaken the rest of the discourse, and give it a forced air : it seems to jut out of the structure of the poem, and to be independent of it : he blames Homer for scattering his sentences too plentifully through his poetry, and calls it an affectation and imperfection. These objections would undoubtedly be of weight, if the sentences were so introduced as to break the thread of narration, as Rapin rightly observes. But is this the case with relation to Homer ? He puts them into the mouth of the actors themselves, and the narration goes on without the least interruption ; it is not the poet who speaks, nor does he suspend the narration to make a refined reflection, or give us a sentence of morality. Is his poetry the worse, because he makes his agents speak weightily and sententially ? It is true, sentences used without moderation are absurd in epic poetry ; they give it a seriousness that is more becoming the gravity of philosophers, than the spirit and majesty of poetry. Bossu judiciously observes, that such thoughts have in their very nature a certain kind of calm wisdom that is contrary to the passions ; but, says he, sentences make a poem useful, and it seems natural to imagine, that the more a work is embellished with them, the more it deserves that general approbation which Horace promises to those who have the art to mix the profitable with the pleasant. In short, sentences are not only allowable, but beautiful in heroic poetry, if they are introduced with propriety and without affectation.



She bade me follow in th' attendant train ;  
 But fear and rev'rence did my steps detain,  
 Lest rash suspicion might alarm thy mind :  
 Man's of a jealous and mistaking kind.

Far from my soul (he cry'd) the gods efface  
 All wrath ill-grounded, and suspicion base ! 395  
 Whate'er is honest, stranger, I approve,  
 And would to Phœbus, Pallas, and to Jove,  
 Such as thou art, thy thought and mine were one,  
 Nor thou unwilling to be call'd my son. 400

v. 391. *She bade me follow ———*  
*But fear and rev'rence, &c.]*

This is directly contrary to what is before asserted in the preceding book, where Nausicaa forbids Ulysses to attend her, to avoid suspicion and slander. Is not Ulysses then guilty of falsehood, and is not falsehood beneath the character of a hero? Eustathius confesses that Ulysses is guilty, *φανέρως ψευδῆσαι*; and he adds, that a wise man may do sometimes opportunely: "Ὅπως ἂν ποιήσῃ ἐν καιρῷ ὁ σοφός." I fear this concession of the bishop's would not pass for good casuistry in these ages. Spondanus is of the same opinion as Eustathius; "Vir prudens certo loco & tempore mendaciis officiosissimis uti novit." Dacier confesses that he somewhat disguises the truth. It will be difficult to vindicate Ulysses from the imputation, if the notions of truth and falsehood were as strict in former, as in these ages: but we must not measure by this standard: it is certain that anciently lying was reckoned no crime by a whole nation; and it still bears a dispute, "An omne falsi-loquium sit mendacium?" Some casuists allow of the "officiosum mendacium," and such is this of Ulysses, intirely complimentary and officious.

v. 400. *Nor thou unwilling to be call'd my son.]* The ancients observe, that Alcinous very artfully inserts this proposition to Ulysses, to prove his veracity. If he had embraced it without hesitation, he would have concluded him an impostor; for it is not conceivable that he should reject all the temptation to marriage made him by Calypso a goddess, and yet immediately embrace this offer of Alcinous to marry his daughter. But if we take the passage in another sense, and believe that Alcinous spoke sincerely without any secret suspicions, yet his conduct is justifiable. It has I confess appeared shocking, that Alcinous, a king, should at the very first interview offer his daughter to a stranger, who might be a vagrant and impostor: but examples are frequent in antiquity of marriages thus concluded between strangers, and with as little hesitation: thus Bellerophon, Tydeus, and Polynices were married. Great personages regarded not riches, but were only solicitous to



In such alliance could'st thou wish to join,  
 A palace stor'd with treasures should be thine.  
 But if reluctant, who shall force thy stay?  
 Jove bids to set the stranger on his way,  
 And ships shall wait thee with the morning ray. 405  
 'Till then, let slumber close thy careful eyes;  
 The wakeful mariners shall watch the skies,  
 And seize the moment when the breezes rise:  
 Then gently waft thee to the pleasing shore,  
 Where thy soul rests, and labour is no more. 410  
 Far as Eubæa tho' thy country lay,  
 Our ships with ease transport thee in a day.  
 Thither of old, earth's \* giant-son to view,  
 On wings of winds with Radamanth they flew:  
 This land, from whence their morning course begun,  
 Saw them returning with the setting sun. 416

procure worthy husbands for their daughters, and birth and virtue were the best recommendations.

It is observable that in the original there is a chasm, an infinitive mood without any thing to govern it; we must therefore supply the word *ἰθέλω* to make it right construction. Eustathius.

v. 411. *Far as Eubæa tho' thy country lay.*] Eubæa, as Eustathius observes, is really far distant from Corcyra, the country of the Phæacians: but Alcinous still makes it more distant, by placing it in another part of the world, and describing it as one of the Fortunate Islands: for in the fourth book Rhadamanthus is said to inhabit the Elysian fields. Alcinous therefore endeavours to have it believed that his isle is near those fields, by asserting that Rhadamanthus made use of Phæacian vessels in his voyage to Tityus. Eustathius further adds, that Rhadamanthus was a prince of great justice, and Tityus a person of great impiety, and that he made this voyage to bring him over to more virtuous dispositions.

v. 415. *This land from whence their morning course begun,  
Saw them returning with the setting sun.*]

If Homer had given the true situation of Corcyra as it really lies opposite to Epirus, yet the hyperbole of sailing thence to Eubæa and returning in the same day, had been utterly an impossibility; for in sailing thither, they must pass the Ionian and Icarian seas, and double the Peloponnesus. But the fiction is yet more extravagant, by the poet's placing it still more distant near the Fortunate Islands.

\* Tityus.



Your eyes shall witness and confirm my tale,  
 Our youth how dext'rous, and how fleet our sail,  
 When justly tim'd with equal sweep they row,  
 And ocean whitens in long tracks below. 420

Thus he. No word th' experienc'd man replies,  
 But thus to heav'n (and heav'nward lifts his eyes)  
 O Jove! oh father! what the king accords  
 Do thou make perfect! sacred be his words!  
 Wide o'er the world Alcinous' glory shine! 425  
 Let fame be his, and ah! my country mine!

Meantime Arete, for the hour of rest  
 Ordains the fleecy couch, and cov'ring vest:  
 Bids her fair train the purple quilts prepare,  
 And the thick carpets spread with busy care. 430

But what is impossible for vessels to effect, that are as swift as birds, and can sail with the rapidity of a thought? Eustathius.

But then is the poet justifiable for relating such incredible amplifications? It may be answered, if he had put these extravagancies into the mouth of Ulysses, he had been unpardonable, but they suit well with the character of Alcinous: they let Ulysses into his disposition, and he appears to be ignorant, credulous, and ostentatious. This was necessary, that Ulysses might know how to adapt himself to his humour, and engage his assistance; and this he actually brings about by raising his wonder and esteem by stories, that could not fail to please such an ignorant and credulous person as Alcinous.

Dacier adds, that the Phæacians were so puffed up with their constant felicity and the protection of the gods, that they thought nothing impossible; upon this opinion all these hyperboles are founded: and this agrees too well with human nature; the more happy men are, the more high and extravagantly they talk, and are too apt to entertain themselves with wild chimæras, which have no existence but in the imagination.

The moral then to these fables of Alcinous is, that a constant series of happiness intoxicates the mind, and that moderation is often learned in the school of adversity.

v. 423. *The prayer of Ulysses.*] It is observable, that Ulysses makes no reply directly to the obliging proposition which the king made concerning his daughter. A refusal might have been disadvantageous to his present circumstances, yet an answer is implied in this prayer, which shews the impatience he has to return to his country, and the gratitude he feels for his promises to effect it: and consequently it discovers that he has no intentions of settling with his daughter amongst the Phæacians. Dacier.



With torches blazing in their hands they past,  
And finish'd all their queen's command with haste :  
Then gave the signal to the willing guest :  
He rose with pleasure, and retir'd to rest.  
There, soft-extended, to th' murm'ring sound 435  
Of the high porch, Ulysses sleeps profound !  
Within, releas'd from cares Alcinous lies ;  
And fast beside, were clos'd Arete's eyes.

v. 437, 438. *The last lines.*] It may seem somewhat extraordinary, that Alcinous and his queen who have been described as patterns of conjugal happiness should sleep in distinct beds. Jupiter and Juno, as Dacier observes from the first of the Iliad, have the same bed. Perhaps the poet designed to shew the luxury and false delicacy of those too happy Phæacians, who lived in such softness that they shunned every thing that might prove troublesome or inconvenient.

This book takes up no longer time than the evening of the thirty-second day.







# THE ODYSSEY.

## \* BOOK VIII.

### THE ARGUMENT.

*Alcinous calls a council, in which it is resolved to transport Ulysses into his country. After which splendid entertainments are made, where the celebrated musician and poet Demodocus plays and sings to the guests. They next proceed to the games, the race, the wrestling, discus, &c. where Ulysses casts a prodigious length, to the admiration of all the spectators. They return again to the banquet, and Demodocus sings the loves of Mars and Venus. Ulysses, after a compliment to the poet, desires him to sing the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy; which subject provoking his tears, Alcinous enquires of his guest, his name, parentage, and fortunes.*

**N**OW fair Aurora lifts her golden ray,  
And all the ruddy orient flames with day:  
Alcinous, and the chief, with dawning light,  
Rose instant from the slumbers of the night;

\* This book has been more severely censured by the critics than any in the whole *Odyssey*: it may therefore be thought necessary to lay before the reader what may be offered in the poet's vindication.

Scaliger in his *Poetics* is very warm against it. Demodocus, observes that critic, sings the lust of the gods (*scditates*) at the feast of Alcinous. And Bossu, though he vindicates the poet; remarks that we meet with some offensive passages in Homer, and instances in the adultery of Mars and Venus.

To know (says Aristotle in his *Art of Poetry*) whether a thing be well or ill spoken, we must not only examine the thing whether it be good or ill, but we must also have regard to him that speaks or acts, and to the person to whom the poet addresses; for the character of the person who speaks, and of him to whom he speaks,



Then to the council-seat they bend their way, 5  
And fill the shining thrones along the bay.

makes that to be good, which would not come well from the mouth of any other person. It is not on this account we vindicate Homer with respect to the immorality that is found in the fable of the adultery of Mars and Venus: we must consider that it is neither the poet, nor his hero, that recites that story: but a Phæacian sings it to Phæacians, a soft effeminate people, at a festival. Besides, it is allowable even in grave and moral writings to introduce vicious persons, who despise the gods; and is not the poet obliged to adapt his poetry to the characters of such persons? And had it not been an absurdity in him to have given us a philosophical or moral song before a people who would be pleased with nothing but gaiety and effeminacy? The moral that we are to draw from this story is, that an idle and soft course of life is the source of all criminal pleasures; and that those persons who lead such lives, are generally pleased to hear such stories, as make their betters partakers in the same vices. This relation of Homer is a useful lesson to them who desire to live virtuously; and it teaches, that if we would not be guilty of such vices, we must avoid such a method of life as inevitably leads to the practice of them.

Rapin attacks this book on another side, and blames it not for its immorality, but lowness. Homer, says he, puts off that air of grandeur and majesty which so properly belongs to his character; he debases himself into a droll, and sinks into a familiar way of talking: he turns things into ridicule, by endeavouring to entertain his reader with something pleasant and diverting: for instance, in the eighth book of the *Odyssey*, he entertains the gods with a comedy, some of whom he makes buffoons: Mars and Venus are introduced upon the stage, taken in a net laid by Vulcan, contrary to the gravity which is so essential to epic poetry.

It must be granted, that the gods are here painted in colours unworthy of deities, yet still with propriety, if we respect the spectators; who are ignorant, debauched Phæacians. Homer was obliged to draw them, not according to his own idea of the gods, but according to the wild fancies of the Phæacians. The poet is not at liberty to ascribe the wisdom of a Socrates to Alcinous: he must follow nature, and like a painter, he may draw deities or monsters, and introduce, as he pleases, either vicious or virtuous characters, provided he always makes them of a piece, consistent with their first representation.

This rule of Aristotle in general, vindicates Homer, and it is necessary to carry it in our minds, because it ought to be applied to all incidents that relate to the Phæacians, in the sequel of the *Odyssey*.

v. 6. *And fill the shining thrones along the bay.*] This place of council was between the two ports, where the temple of Neptune stood; probably, like that in the second book, open to the air.



Meanwhile Minerva, in her guardian care,  
Shoots from the starry vault thro' fields of air;  
In form, a herald of the king she flies  
From peer to peer, and thus incessant cries. 10

Nobles and chiefs who rule Phæacia's states,  
The king in council your attendance waits :  
A prince of form divine your aid implores,  
O'er unknown seas arriv'd from unknown shores.

She spoke, and sudden with tumultuous sounds 15  
Of thronging multitudes the shore rebounds :  
At once the seats thy fill : and every eye  
Gaz'd, as before some brother of the sky.  
Pallas, with grace divine his form improves,  
More high he treads, and more enlarg'd he moves : 20

v. 9. *In form, a herald* —] It may be asked what occasion there is to introduce a goddess, to perform an action that might have been as well executed by a real herald? Eustathius observes, that this Minerva is either fame, which informs the Phæacians that a stranger of uncommon figure is arrived, and upon this report they assemble; or it implies, that this assembly was made by the wisdom of the peers, and consequently a poet may ascribe it to the goddess of wisdom, it being the effect of her inspiration.

The poet by the introduction of a deity warns us, that something of importance is to succeed; this is to be ushered in with solemnity, and consequently the appearance of Minerva in this place is not unnecessary: the action of importance to be described is no less than the change of the fortunes of Ulysses; it is from this assembly that his affairs take a new turn, and hasten to a happy re-establishment.

v. 13. *A prince of form divine* —] Minerva speaks thus in favour of Ulysses, to excite the curiosity of the Phæacians: and indeed the short speech is excellently adapted to this purpose. They were fond of strangers: the goddess therefore tells them, that a stranger is arrived of a god-like appearance. They admired outward show, he is therefore described as a man of extraordinary beauty, and Minerva for this reason immediately improves it. Eustathius,

v. 19. *Pallas with grace divine his form improves.*] This circumstance has been repeated several times almost in the same words, since the beginning of the *Odyssey*. I cannot be of opinion that such repetitions are beauties. In any other poet, they might have been thought to proceed from a poverty of invention, though cer-



She sheds celestial bloom, regard to draw;  
 And gives a dignity of mien, to awe;  
 With strength, the future prize of fame to play,  
 And gather all the honours of the day.

Then from his glitt'ring throne Alcinous rose: 25  
 Attend, he cry'd, while we our will disclose.

certainly not in Homer, in whom there is rather a superfluity than barrenness. Perhaps having once said a thing well, he despaired of improving it, and so repeated it; or perhaps he intended to inculcate this truth, that all our accomplishments, as beauty, strength, &c. are the gifts of the gods; and being willing to fix it upon the mind, he dwells upon it, and inserts it in many places. Here indeed it has a particular propriety, as it is a circumstance that first engages the Phæacians in the favour of Ulysses: his beauty was his first recommendation, and consequently the poet with great judgment sets his hero off to the best advantage, it being an incident from which he dates all his future happiness; and therefore to be insisted upon with a particular solemnity. Plato in his *Theætetus* applies the latter part of this description to Parmenides. Αἰδοῖται μοι φαίνεσθαι εἶναι, ἀμα δεινός τε.

v. 25. *From his glitt'ring throne Alcinous rose.*] It might be expected that Ulysses, upon whose account alone Alcinous calls this assembly, should have made his condition known, and spoken himself to the Phæacians; whereas he appears upon the stage as a mute person, and the multitude departs intirely ignorant of his name and fortunes. It may be answered, that this was not a proper time for a fuller discovery, the poet defers it till Ulysses had distinguished himself in the games, and fully raised their curiosity. It is for the same reason that Ulysses is silent; if he had spoken, he could not have avoided to let them into the knowledge of his condition, but the contrary method is greatly for his advantage, and assures him of success from the recommendation of a king.

But there is another, and perhaps a better reason, to be given for this silence of Ulysses: the poet reserves the whole story of his sufferings for an entire and uninterrupted narration; if he had now made any discovery, he must afterwards either have fallen into tautology, or broken the thread of the relation, so that it would not have been of a piece, but wanted continuity. Besides, it comes with more weight at once, than if it had been made at several times, and consequently makes a deeper impression upon the memory and passion of the auditors. Virgil has taken a different method in the discovery of Æneas; there was a necessity for it; his companions, to engage Dido in their protection, tell her they belong to no less a hero than Æneas, so that he is in a manner known before he appears; but Virgil after the example of Homer reserves his story for an entire narration.



Your present aid this god-like stranger craves,  
Toft by rude tempeft thro' a war of waves;  
Perhaps from realms that view the rifing day,  
Or nations fubject to the western ray. 30

Then grant, what here all fons of woe obtain,  
(For here affliction never pleads in vain:)

Be chosen youths prepar'd, expert to try  
The vaft profound, and bid the vefſel fly:

Lanch the tall bark, and order ev'ry oar; 35  
Then in our court indulge the genial hour.

Instant, you failors, to this task attend;  
Swift to the palace, all ye peers aſcend;

Let none to ſtrangers honours due diſclaim:  
Be there Demodocus, the bard of fame, 40

Taught by the gods to pleaſe, when high he ſings  
The vocal lay, responsive to the ſtrings.

Thus ſpoke the prince: th' attending peers obey,  
In ſtate they move; Alcinous leads the way:

Swift to Demodocus the herald flies, 45  
At once the failors to their charge ariſe:

They lanch the vefſel, and unfurl the ſails,  
And ſtretch the ſwelling canvas to the gales;

v. 35. *Lanch the tall bark* —] The word in the original is *πρωτόπλοος*; which ſignifies not only a ſhip that makes its firſt voyage, but a ſhip that outſails other ſhips, as Euaſthius obſerves. It is not poſſible for a tranſlator to retain ſuch ſingularities with any beauty; it would ſeem pedantry and affectation, and not poetry.

v. 41. *Taught by the gods to pleaſe* —] Homer here inſinuates that all good and great qualities are the gifts of God. He ſhews us likewiſe, that muſic was conſtantly made uſe of in the courts of all the oriental princes; we have ſeen Phemius in Ithaca, a ſecond in Lacedæmon with Menelaus, and Demodocus here with Alcinous. The Hebrews were likewiſe of remarkable ſkill in muſic; every one knows what effect the harp of David had upon the ſpirit of Saul. Solomon tells us, that he ſought out ſinging men and ſinging women to entertain him like theſe in Homer, at the time of feaſting: thus another oriental writer compares muſic at feaſts to an emerald incloſed in gold; “as a ſignet of an emerald ſet in a work of gold, ſo is the melody of muſic with pleaſant wine.” Ecclus xxxii. 6. Dacier.



Then to the palace move: A gath'ring throng,  
 Youth, and white age, tumultuous pour along: 50  
 Now all access to the dome are fill'd;  
 Eight boars, the choicest of the herd, are kill'd:  
 Two beeves, twelve fatlings from the flock they bring  
 To crown the feast; so wills the bounteous king.  
 The herald now arrives, and guides along 55  
 The sacred master of celestial song:  
 Dear to the muse! who gave his days to flow  
 With mighty blessings, mix'd with mighty woe:

v. 57. *Dear to the muse! who gave his days to flow  
 With mighty blessings, mix'd with mighty woe.*]

It has been generally thought that Homer represents himself in the person of Demodocus; and Dacier imagines that this passage gave occasion to the ancients to believe that Homer was blind. But that he really was blind is testified by himself in his hymn to Apollo, which Thucydides asserts to be the genuine production of Homer, and quotes it as such in his history.

ὦ κῆραι, τίς δ' ὕμνιν ἀνὴρ, ἥδιστος ἀοιδῶν,  
 ἐνθάδε πωλεῖται; ἢ τῷ τέρπεσθε μάλιστα;  
 τρεῖς δ' εὖ μάλα πᾶσαι ὑποκρίνασθε, ἀφ' ὑμέων  
 τυφλὸς ἀνὴρ — — —

That is, "O virgins, if any person asks you who is he, the most pleasing of all poets, who frequents this place, and who is he who most delights you? reply, he is a blind man, &c." It is true, as Eustathius observes, that there are many features in the two poets that bear a great resemblance; Demodocus sings divinely, the same is true of Homer; Demodocus sings the adventures of the Greeks before Troy, so does Homer in his Iliad.

If this be true, it must be allowed that Homer has found out a way of commending himself very artfully: had he spoken plainly, he had been extravagantly vain; but by this indirect way of praise, the reader is at liberty to apply it either solely to Demodocus, or obliquely to Homer.

It is remarkable, that Homer takes a very extraordinary care of Demodocus his brother poet; and introduces him as a person of great distinction. He calls him in this book the hero Demodocus: he places him on a throne studded with silver, and gives him an herald for his attendant; nor is he less careful to provide for his entertainment, he has a particular table, and a capacious bowl set before him to drink as often as he had a mind, as the original expresses it. Some merry wits have turned the last circumstance into raillery, and insinuate that Homer in this place, as well as in the



With clouds of darkness quench'd his visual ray,  
 But gave him skill to raise the lofty lay. 60  
 High on a radiant throne sublime in state,  
 Encircled by huge multitudes, he sat:  
 With silver shone the throne; his lyre well strung  
 To rapturous sounds, at hand Pontonous hung:  
 Before his seat a polish'd table shines, 65  
 And a full goblet foams with gen'rous wines:  
 His food a herald bore: and now they fed;  
 And now the rage of craving hunger fled.

Then fir'd by all the muse, aloud he sings  
 The mighty deeds of demigods and kings: 70  
 From that fierce wrath the noble song arose,  
 That made Ulysses and Achilles foes:  
 How o'er the feast they doom the fall of Troy;  
 The stern debate Atrides hears with joy:  
 For heav'n foretold the contest, when he trod 75  
 The marble threshold of the Delphic god,  
 Curious to learn the counsels of the sky,  
 E'er yet he loos'd the rage of war on Troy.

former, means himself in the person of Demodocus; an intimation, that he would not be displeased to meet with the like hospitality.

v. 74. *The stern debate Atrides bears with joy.*] This passage is not without obscurity, but Eustathius thus explains it from Athenæus. In the Iliad the generals sup with Agamemnon with sobriety and moderation; and if in the Odyssey we see Achilles and Ulysses in contention to the great satisfaction of Agamemnon, it is because these contentions are of use to his affairs; they contend whether force or stratagem is to be employed to take Troy; Achilles after the death of Hector, persuaded to assault it by storm, Ulysses by stratagem. There is a further reason given for the satisfaction which Agamemnon expresses at the contest of these two heroes: before the opening of the war of Troy he consulted the oracle concerning the issue of it; Apollo answered, that Troy should be taken when two princes most renowned, the one for wisdom and the other for valour should contend at a sacrifice of the gods; Agamemnon rejoices to see the prediction fulfilled, knowing that the destruction of Troy was at hand, the oracle being accomplished by the contest of Ulysses and Achilles.



Touch'd at the song, Ulysses straight resign'd  
 To soft affliction all his manly mind : 80  
 Before his eyes the purple vest he drew,  
 Industrious to conceal the falling dew :  
 But when the music paus'd, he ceas'd to shed  
 The flowing tear, and rais'd his drooping head :  
 And lifting to the gods a goblet crown'd, 85  
 He pour'd a pure libation to the ground.

Transported with the song, the list'ning train,  
 Again with loud applause demand the strain :

v. 79. *Touch'd at the song* —] Many objections may be made against this relation ; it may seem to offend against probability, and appears somewhat incredible, that Demodocus should thus luckily pitch upon the war of Troy for the subject of his song, and still more happily upon the deeds of Ulysses ; for instance, a man may die of an apoplexy, this is probable ; but that this should happen just when the poet has occasion for it, is in some degree incredible. But this objection will cease, if we consider not only that the war of Troy was the greatest event of those ages, and consequently might be the common subject of entertainment ; but also that it is not Homer or Demodocus who relates the story, but the muse who inspires it ; Homer several times in this book ascribes the song to immediate inspiration ; and this supernatural assistance reconciles it to human probability, and the story becomes credible when it is supposed to be related by a deity. Aristotle in his Poetics commends this conduct as artful and judicious ; Alcinous, says he, invites Ulysses to an entertainment to divert him, where Demodocus sings his actions, at which he cannot refrain from tears, which Alcinous perceives, and this brings about the discovery of Ulysses.

It may further be objected, that a sufficient cause for this violence of tears is not apparent ; for why should Ulysses weep to hear his own brave achievements, especially when nothing calamitous is recited ? This indeed would be improbable, if that were the whole of what the poet sung : but Homer only gives us the heads of the song, a few sketches of a larger draught, and leaves something to be filled up by the imagination of the reader. Thus for instance, the words of Demodocus recalled to the mind of Ulysses all the hardships he had undergone during a ten years war, all the scenes of horror he had beheld, and the loss and sufferings of all his friends. And no doubt he might weep even for the calamities he brought upon Troy, an ingenuous nature cannot be insensible when any of its own species suffers ; the Trojans were his enemies, but still they were men, and compassion is due even to unfortunate enemies. I doubt not but it will be allowed, that there is here sufficient cause to draw tears from a hero, unless a hero must be supposed to be divested of humanity.



Again Ulysses veil'd his pensive head,  
 Again unmann'd a show'r of sorrow shed : 90  
 Conceal'd he wept : the king observ'd alone  
 The silent tear, and heard the secret groan :  
 Then to the bard aloud : O cease to sing,  
 Dumb be thy voice, and mute th' harmonious string ;  
 Enough the feast has pleas'd, enough the pow'r 95  
 Of heav'nly song has crown'd the genial hour !  
 Incessant in the games your strength display,  
 Contest, ye brave, the honours of the day !  
 That pleas'd th' admiring stranger may proclaim  
 In distant regions the Phæacian fame : 100  
 None wield the gauntlet with so dire a sway,  
 Or swifter in the race devour the way ;  
 None in the leap spring with so strong a bound,  
 Or firmer, in the wrestling, press the ground.

Thus spoke the king ; th' attending peers obey : 105  
 In state they move, Alcinous leads the way :  
 His golden lyre Demodocus unstrung,  
 High on a column in the palace hung :  
 And guided by a herald's guardian cares,  
 Majestic to the lists of fame repairs. 110

Now swarms the populace ; a countless throng,  
 Youth and hoar age ; and man drives man along :  
 The games begin : Ambitious of the prize,  
 Acronæus, Thoon, and Eretmeus rise ;

v. 101. *None wield the gauntlet with so dire a sway.*] Eustathius asks how Alcinous could make such an assertion, and give the preference to his people before all nations, when he neither knew, nor was known to, any heroes out of his own island ? He answers that he speaks like a Phæacian, with ostentation and vanity ; besides it is natural for all people to form, not illaudibly, too favourable a judgment of their own country : and this agrees with the character of the Phæacians in a more particular manner, who called themselves ἀσχιθεοὶ, and the favourites of the gods.

v. 113. *The games —*] Eustathius remarks, that Homer very judiciously passes over these games in a few lines, having in the Iliad exhausted that subject ; he there enlarged upon them, because



The prize Ocyalus and Prymneus claim, 115  
 Anchialus and Panteus, chiefs of fame :  
 There Proreus, Nautes, Eratreus appear,  
 And fam'd Amphialus, Polyneus' heir :  
 Euryalus, like Mars terrific, rose,  
 When clad in wrath he withers hosts of foes : 120  
 Naubolides with grace unequall'd shone,  
 Or equall'd by Laodamus alone.  
 With these came forth Ambasineus the strong ;  
 And three brave sons, from great Alcinous sprung.

they were essential ornaments, it being necessary that Patroclus should be honoured by his friend with the utmost solemnity. Here they are only introduced occasionally, and therefore the poet hastens to things more requisite, and carries on the thread of his story. But then it may be asked why are they mentioned at all, and what do they contribute to the re-establishment of Ulysses? It is evident that they are not without an happy effect, they give Ulysses an opportunity to signalize his character, to engage the king and the peers in his favour, and this induces them to convey him to his own country, which is one of the most material incidents in the whole *Odyssey*.

v. 119. *Eurialus, like Mars terrific, rose.*] I was at a loss for a reason why this figure of terrour was introduced amongst an unwarlike nation, upon an occasion contrary to the general description, in the midst of games and diversions. Eustathius takes notice, that the poet distinguishes the character of Euryalus, to force it upon our observation; he being the person who uses Ulysses with roughness and inhumanity, and is the only peer that is described with a sword, which he gives to Ulysses to repair his injury.

He further remarks, that almost all the names of the persons who are mentioned as candidates in these games are borrowed from the sea, Phæacia being an island, and the people greatly addicted to navigation. I have taken the liberty to vary from the order observed by Homer in the catalogue of the names, to avoid the affinity of sound in many of them, as Euryalus, Ocyalus, &c. and too many names being tedious, at least in English poetry, I passed over the three sons of Alcinous, Laodamas, Halius, and Clytoneus, and only mentioned them in general as the sons of Alcinous.

I was surpris'd to see Dacier render

— — — — υἱὸς Πολυνῆα Τεκτονίδαο.

The son of Polyneus the carpenter; it looks like burlesque: it ought to be rendered, The son of Polyneus Tectonides, a Patronymic, and it is so understood by all commentators.



Rang'd in a line the ready racers stand, 125  
 Start from the goal, and vanish o'er the strand :  
 Swift as on wings of wind upborn they fly,  
 And drifts of rising dust involve the sky :  
 Before the rest, what space the hinds allow  
 Between the mule and ox, from plough to plough; 130  
 Clytoneus sprung: he wing'd the rapid way,  
 And bore th' unrivall'd honours of the day.  
 With fierce embrace the brawny wrestlers join;  
 The conquest, great Euryalus, is thine.  
 Amphialus sprung forward with a bound, 135  
 Superiour in the leap, a length of ground :  
 From Elatreus' strong arm the discus flies,  
 And sings with unmatch'd force along the skies.  
 And Laodam whirls high, with dreadful sway,  
 The gloves of death, victorious in the fray. 140

While thus the peerage in the games contends,  
 In act to speak, Laodamas ascends :

v. 129. — — — *What space the hinds allow*

*Between the mule and ox, from plough to plough.]*

This image drawn from rural affairs is now become obsolete, and gives us no distinct idea of the distance between Clytoneus and the other racers; but this obscurity arises not from Homer's want of perspicuity, but from the change which has happened in the method of tillage, and from a length of time which has effaced the distinct image which was originally stamped upon it; so that what was understood universally in the days of Homer is grown almost unintelligible to posterity. Eustathius only observes, that the teams of mules were placed at some distance from the teams of oxen; the mule being more swift in his labour than the ox, and consequently more ground was allowed to the mule than the ox by the husbandman. This gives us an idea that Clytoneus was the foremost of the racers, but how much is not to be discovered with any certainty. Aristarchus, as Didymus informs us, thus interprets Homer. "As much as a yoke of mules set to work at the same time with a yoke of oxen, outgoes the oxen, (for mules are swifter than oxen) so much Clytoneus outwent his competitors." The same description occurs in the tenth book of the Iliad, verse 419, to which passage I refer the reader for a more large and different explication.



O friends, he cries, the stranger seems well skill'd  
To try th' illustrious labours of the field :  
I deem him brave ; then grant the brave man's claim,  
Invite the hero to his share of fame. 146

What nervous arms he boasts ! how firm his tread !  
His limbs how turn'd ! how broad his shoulders spread !  
By age unbroke ! — but all-consuming care  
Destroys perhaps the strength that time would spare :  
Dire is the ocean, dread in all its forms ! 151

Man must decay, when man contends with storms.

Well hast thou spoke, (Euryalus replies)  
Thine is the guest, invite him thou to rise.  
Swift at the word advancing from the croud 155  
He made obeisance, and thus spoke aloud.

Vouchsafes the rev'rend stranger to display  
His manly worth, and share the glorious day ?  
Father, arise ! for thee thy port proclaims  
Expert to conquer in the solemn games. 160  
To fame arise ! for what more fame can yield  
Than the swift race, or conflict of the field ?  
Steal from corroding care one transient day,  
To glory give the space thou hast to stay ;

v. 149. *By age unbroke !*] It is in the original literally, " he wants not youth ;" this is spoken according to appearance only, for Ulysses must be supposed to be above forty, having spent twenty years in the wars of Troy, and in his return to his country. It is true Hesiod calls a person a youth, ἀἰζνόν, who was forty years of age, but this must be understood with some allowance, unless we suppose that the life of man was longer in the times of Hesiod, than in these later ages ; the contrary of which appears from many places in Homer, where the shortness of man's life is compared to the leaves of trees, &c. But what the poet here relates is very justifiable, for the youth which Ulysses appears to have, proceeds from Minerva ; it is not a natural quality, but conferred by the immediate operation of a goddess.

This speech concludes with an address of great beauty ; Laodamas invites Ulysses to act in the games, yet at the same time furnishes him with a decent excuse, to decline the invitation if it be against his inclinations ; should he refuse, he imputes the refusal to his calamities, not to any want of skill, or personal inability.



Short is the time, and lo ! ev'n now the gales 165  
Call thee aboard, and stretch the swelling sails.

To whom with sighs Ulysses gave reply :  
Ah why th' ill-suiting pastime must I try ?  
To gloomy care my thoughts alone are free ;  
Ill the gay sports with troubled hearts agree : 170  
Sad from my natal hour my days have ran,  
A much-afflicted, much-enduring man !  
Who suppliant to the king and peers, implores  
A speedy voyage to his native shores.

Wide wanders, Laodam, thy erring tongue, 175  
The sports of glory to the brave belong,  
(Retorts Euryalus :) he boasts no claim  
Among the great, unlike the sons of fame.  
A wand'ring merchant he frequents the main,  
Some mean sea-farer in pursuit of gain ; 180  
Studious of freight, in naval trade well skill'd,  
But dreads th' athletic labours of the field.

Incens'd Ulysses with a frown replies,  
O forward to proclaim thy soul unwise !  
With partial hands the gods their gifts dispense ; 185  
Some greatly think, some speak with manly sense ;  
Here heav'n an elegance of form denies,  
But wisdom the defect of form supplies :  
This man with energy of thought controuls,  
And steals with modest violence our souls, 190

v. 167. ——— *Ulysses gave reply.*] These are the first words spoken by Ulysses before the Phæacians ; and we cannot but be curious to know how he makes his address to engage a people, in whom he has no personal interest, in his favour. His speech is excellently adapted to this purpose : he represents himself as a suppliant to the king and all the assembly ; and all suppliants being esteemed sacred, he at once makes it a duty in all the assembly to protect him ; if they refuse to assist him, they become guilty of no less a crime, than a violation of the laws of hospitality.

v. 190. *And steals with modest violence our souls,  
He speaks reserv'dly, but he speaks with force.*]

There is a difficulty in the Greek expression, ἀσφαλέως ἀγορεύεις,



He speaks reserv'dly, but he speaks with force,  
 Nor can one word be chang'd but for a worse;  
 In public more than mortal he appears,  
 And as he moves the gazing croud reveres.  
 While others beautiful as th' ætherial kind, 195  
 The nobler portion want, a knowing mind.  
 In outward show heav'n gives thee to excell,  
 But heav'n denies the praise of thinking well.  
 Ill bear the brave a rude ungovern'd tongue,  
 And, youth, my gen'rous soul resents the wrong: 200  
 Skill'd in heroic exercise, I claim  
 A post of honour with the sons of fame:

*αἰδοῖ μελιχίῃ*; that is, "he speaks securely with a winning modesty." Dionysius Halicarnassus interprets it, in his Examination of Oratory, to signify that the orator argues "per concessa," and so proceeds with certainty, or *ἀσφαλέως*; without danger of refutation. The word properly signifies without "stumbling," *ἀπροσκόπως*, as in the proverb cited by Eustathius, *φοβηρότερον ποσὶν ἢ περὶ γλώτῃ προσκόπειν*; that is, "it is better to stumble with the feet than with the tongue." The words are concise, but of a very extensive comprehension, and take in every thing, both in sentiments and diction, that enters into the character of a complete orator. Dacier concurs in the same interpretation; "He speaks reservedly, or with caution; he hazards nothing that he would afterwards wish (repentir) to alter. And all his words are full of sweetness and modesty." These two lines are found almost literally in Hesiod's Theogony, v. 92.

*Ἐρχόμενον δ' ἀνὰ ἄστυ, θεὸν ὥς ἰλάσκονταί  
 Αἰδοῖ μελιχίῃ. Μετὰ δὲ πρέπει ἀγρομένοισιν.*

Whether Homer borrowed these verses from Hesiod, or Hesiod from Homer, is not evident. Tully in his book de Senectute is of opinion, that Homer preceded Hesiod many ages, and consequently in his judgment the verses are Homer's. I question not but he had this very passage in view in his third book of his orator. "Quem stupefacti dicentem intuentur, quem Deum, ut ita dicam, inter homines putant;" which is almost a translation of Homer.

v. 201. *Skill'd in heroic exercise, I claim  
 A post of honour with the sons of fame.]*

It may be thought that Ulysses, both here and in his subsequent speech, is too ostentatious, and that he dwells more than modesty allows upon his own accomplishments: but self-praise is sometimes no fault. Plutarch has wrote a dissertation, how a man may



Such was my boast, while vigour crown'd my days,  
Now care surrounds me, and my force decays ;  
Inur'd a melancholy part to bear, 205  
In scenes of death, by tempest and by war.  
Yet thus by woes impair'd, no more I wave  
To prove the hero. — Slander stings the brave.

Then striding forward with a furious bound,  
He wrench'd a rocky fragment from the ground. 210  
By far more pond'rous and more huge by far,  
Than what Phæacia's sons discharg'd in air.  
Fierce from his arm th' enormous load he flings ;  
Sonorous thro' the shaded air it sings ;  
Couch'd to the earth, tempestuous as it flies, 215  
The crowd gaze upward while it cleaves the skies.  
Beyond all marks, with many a giddy round  
Down rushing, it up-turns a hill of ground.

That instant Pallas, bursting from a cloud,  
Fix'd a distinguish'd mark, and cry'd aloud. 220

praise himself without envy : what Ulysses here speaks is not a justification. Persons in distress, says Plutarch, may speak of themselves with dignity : it shews a greatness of soul, and that they bear up against the storms of fortune with bravery : they have too much courage to fly to pity and commiseration, which betray despair and an hopeless condition : such a man struggling with ill fortune shews himself a champion, and if by a bravery of speech he transforms himself from miserable and abject, into bold and noble, he is not to be censured as vain or obstinate, but great and invincible.

This is a full justification of Ulysses, he opposes virtue to calumny ; and what Horace applies to himself we apply to this hero.

“ Quæsitam meritis, sume superbiam.”

Besides, it was necessary to shew himself a person of figure and distinction, to recommend his condition to the Phæacians : he was a stranger to the whole nation, and he therefore takes a probable method to engage their assistance by acquainting them with his worth ; he describes himself as unfortunate, but yet as a hero in adversity.

v. 219. *That instant Pallas, bursting from a cloud.*] There is not a passage in the whole Odyssey, where a deity is introduced with less apparent necessity : the goddess of wisdom is brought down from heaven to act what might have been done as well by any of the spectators, namely to proclaim what was self-evident, the vic-



Ev'n he who fightless wants his visual ray,  
 May by his touch alone award the day :  
 Thy signal throw transcends the utmost bound  
 Of ev'ry champion by a length of ground :  
 Securely bid the strongest of the train 225  
 Arise to throw: the strongest throws in vain.

She spoke ; and momentary mounts the sky :  
 The friendly voice Ulysses hears with joy ;  
 Then thus aloud, (elate with decent pride)  
 Rise ye Phæacians, try your force, he cry'd ; 230  
 If with this throw the strongest cast'er vye,  
 Still, further still, I bid the discus fly.  
 Stand forth, ye champions, who the gauntlet wield,  
 Or you, the swiftest racers of the field !  
 Stand forth, ye wrestlers, who these pastimes grace ! 235  
 I wield the gauntlet, and I run the race,  
 In such heroic games I yield to none,  
 Or yield to brave Laodamas alone :  
 Shall I with brave Laodamas contend ?  
 A friend is sacred, and I stile him friend. 240

tory of Ulysses. When a deity appears, our expectations are awakened for the introduction of something important, but what action of importance succeeds ? It is true, her appearance encourages Ulysses, and immediately upon it he challenges the whole Phæacian assembly. But he was already victor, and no further action is performed. If indeed she had appeared openly in favour of Ulysses, this would have been greatly advantageous to him, and the Phæacians must have highly revered a person who was so remarkably honoured by a goddess : but it is not evident that the Phæacians, or even Ulysses knew the deity, but took her for a man as she appeared to be ; and Ulysses himself immediately rejoices that he had found a friend in the assembly. If this be true, the descent of Pallas will prove very unnecessary ; for if she was esteemed to be merely human, she acts nothing in the character of a deity, and performs no more than might have been performed by a man, and consequently gave no greater courage to Ulysses than a friend actually gave, for such only he believed her to be. Eustathius appears to be of the same opinion, for he says the place is to be understood allegorically, and what is thus spoken by a Phæacian with wisdom, is by the poet applied to the goddess of it.

v. 139. *Shall I with brave Laodamas contend ?  
 A friend is sacred, and I stile him friend.]*



Ungen'rous were the man, and base of heart,  
 Who takes the kind, and pays th' ungrateful part;  
 Chiefly the man, in foreign realms confin'd,  
 Base to his friend, to his own interest blind:  
 All, all your heroes I this day defy; 245  
 Give me a man, that we our might may try.  
 Expert in ev'ry art, I boast the skill  
 To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill;  
 Should a whole host at once discharge the bow,  
 My well-aim'd shaft with death prevents the foe: 250

Nothing can be more artful than this address of Ulysses; he finds a way in the middle of a bold challenge, to secure himself of a powerful advocate, by paying an ingenious and laudable deference to his friend. But it may be asked if decency be observed, and ought Ulysses to challenge the father Alcinous (for he speaks universally) and yet except his son Laodamas, especially when Alcinous was more properly his friend than Laodamas? And why should he be excepted, rather than the other brothers? Spondanus answers, that the two brothers are included in the person of Laodamas, they all have the same relation to Ulysses, as being equally a suppliant to them all, and consequently claim the same exemption from this challenge as Laodamas; and Alcinous is not concerned in it: he is the judge and arbitrator of the games (not a candidate) like Achilles in the Iliad. But why is Laodamas named in particular? He was the elder brother, and Ulysses might therefore be consigned to his care in particular, by the right due to his seniority; besides, he might be the noblest personage, having conquered his antagonist at the gauntlet, which was the most dangerous, and consequently the most honourable exercise, and therefore Ulysses might pay him peculiar honours. Spondanus.

v. 249. *Should a whole host at once discharge the bow,  
 My well-aim'd shaft with death prevents the foe.]*

There is an ambiguity in the original, and it may imply either, that if Ulysses and his friends were at the same time to aim their arrows against an enemy, his arrow would fly with more certainty and expedition than that of his companions: or that if his enemies had bent all their bows at once against him, yet his shaft would reach his adversary before they could discharge their arrows. Eustathius follows the former, Dacier the latter interpretation: And certainly the latter argues the greater intrepidity and presence of mind: it shews Ulysses in the extremity of danger capable of acting with calmness and serenity, and shooting with the same cer-



Alone superiour in the field of Troy,  
 Great Philoctetes taught the shaft to fly.  
 From all the sons of earth unrivall'd praise  
 I justly claim; but yield to better days,  
 To those fam'd days when great Alcides rose, 255  
 And Eurytus, who bade the gods be foes:  
 (Vain Eurytus, whose art became his crime,  
 Swept from the earth he perish'd in his prime;  
 Sudden th' irremeable way he trod,  
 Who boldly durst defy the bowyer-god.) 260  
 In fighting fields as far the spear I throw,  
 As flies an arrow from the well drawn bow.  
 Sole in the race the contest I decline,  
 Stiff are my weary joints, and I resign.

tainty and steadiness, though multitudes of enemies endanger his life. I have followed this explication, as it is nobler, and shews Ulysses to be a consummate hero.

v. 257. *Vain Eurytus* ———] This Eurytus was king of OEchalia, famous for his skill in archery; he proposed his daughter Iole in marriage to any person that could conquer him at the exercise of the bow. Later writers differ from Homer, as Eustathius observes, concerning Eurytus. They write that Hercules overcame him, and he denying his daughter, was slain, and his daughter made captive by Hercules: whereas Homer writes that he was killed by Apollo, that is, died a sudden death, according to the import of that expression. The ancients differ much about OEchalia; some place it in Eubœa, and some in Messenia, of which opinion is Pausanias. But Homer in the Iliad places it in Thessaly: for he mentions with it Tricca and Ithomè, which, as Dacier observes, were cities of Thessaly.

v. 263. *Sole in the race the contest I decline.*] This is directly contrary to his challenge in the beginning of the speech, where he mentions the race amongst the other games. How then is this difference to be reconciled? Very naturally. Ulysses speaks with a generous warmth, and is transported with anger in the beginning of his oration: here the heat of it is cooled, and consequently reason takes place, and he has time to reflect, that a man so disabled by calamities is not an equal match for a younger and less fatigued antagonist. This is an exact representation of human nature; when our passions remit, the vehemence of our speech remits; at first he speaks like a man in anger, here like the wise Ulysses.



By storms and hunger worn : age well may fail, 265  
When storms and hunger both at once assail.

Abash'd, the numbers hear the god-like man,  
'Till great Alcinous mildly thus began.

Well hast thou spoke, and well thy gen'rous tongue  
With decent pride refutes a public wrong : 270

Warm are thy words, but warm without offence;  
Fear only fools, secure in men of sense :

Thy worth is known. Then hear our country's claim,  
And bear to heroes our heroic fame ;

It is observable that Ulysses all along maintains a decency and reverence towards the gods, even while his anger seems to be master over his reason ; he gives Eurytus as an example of the just vengeance of heaven, and shews himself in a very opposite light : he is so far from contending with the gods, that he allows himself to be inferiour to some other heroes : an instance of modesty.

v. 265. ————— age well may fail,  
When storms and hunger —————]

This passage appears to me to refer to the late storms and shipwreck, and the long abstinence Ulysses suffered in sailing from Calypso to the Phæacian island ; for when Nausicaa found him, he was almost dead with hunger, as appears from the sixth of the Odyssey. Dacier is of a different opinion, and thinks it relates to his abstinence and shipwreck upon his leaving Circe, before he came to Calypso. This seems very improbable ; for Ulysses had lived seven years with that goddess in great affluence, and consequently must be supposed to have recruited his loss of strength in so long a time, and with the particular care of a goddess : besides Alcinous was acquainted with his late shipwreck, and his daughter Nausicaa was in some degree witness to it : it is not therefore more probable that he should refer to this latter incident, than speak of a calamity that happened seven years past, to which they were intirely strangers ?

Dacier likewise asserts that Eustathius is guilty of a mistake, in making κομιδή, or “ provision,” to signify the ship itself ; but in reality he makes an evident distinction : Οὐ γὰρ διὰ τὸ μὴ κομιδὴν ἐν βρώμασιν ἔχειν ἐδαμάσθη Ὀδυσσεὺς τοῖς κύμασιν, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐθράυσθη κύμασιν ἢ κομιδὴν ἔχουσα ναῦς ; “ Ulysses suffered not in the storm “ because he had no provisions to eat, but because the ship that “ bore the provisions was broken by the storm ;” which shews a wide difference between the vessel and the provisions : so that the expression really implies that the vessel was broken, but Eustathius is far from affirming that κομιδὴ and ναῦς (except in such an improper sense) have the same signification.



In distant realms our glorious deeds display, 275  
 Repeat them frequent in the genial day;  
 When blest with ease thy woes and wand'rings end,  
 Teach them thy comfort, bid thy sons attend;  
 How lov'd of Jove he crown'd our fires with praise,  
 How we their offspring dignify our race. 280

Let other realms the deathful gauntlet wield,  
 Or boast the glories of th' athletic field;  
 We in the course unrivall'd speed display,  
 Or thro' cærulean billows plough the way,  
 To dress, to dance, to sing our sole delight, 385  
 The feast or bath by day, and love by night:  
 Rise then ye skill'd in measures; let him bear  
 Your fame to men that breathe a distant air:  
 And faithful say, to you the pow'rs belong  
 To race, to sail, to dance, to chant the song. 290

But, herald, to the palace swift repair,  
 And the soft lyre to grace our pastimes bear.

Swift at the word, obedient to the king,  
 The herald flies, the tuneful lyre to bring.  
 Up rose nine seniors, chosen to survey 295  
 The future games, the judges of the day:  
 With instant care they mark a spacious round,  
 And level for the dance th' allotted ground;

v. 275. *In distant realms our glorious deeds display.*] From this extravagant preface, it might be imagined that Alcinous was king of a nation of heroes: whereas when he comes to explain the excellence of his subjects, he has scarce any thing to boast of that is manly; they spend an idle life in singing, dancing, and feasting. Thus the poet all along writes consistently: we may know the Phæacians by their character, which is always to be voluptuous, or as Horace expresses it,

“ ————— Alcinoïque

“ In cute curandâ plus æquo operata juvenus.”

And Eustathius rightly observes that the poet does not teach that we ought to live such lives, but only relates historically what lives were led by the Phæacians; he describes them as a contemptible people, and consequently proposes them as objects of our scorn, not imitation,



The herald bears the lyre : intent to play,  
 The bard advancing meditates the lay, 300  
 Skill'd in the dance, 'till youths, a blooming band,  
 Graceful before the heav'nly minstrel stand ;  
 Light-bounding from the earth, at once they rise,  
 Their feet half-viewless quiver in the skies :  
 Ulysses gaz'd, astonish'd to survey 305  
 The glancing splendours as their sandals play.  
 Meantime the bard, alternate to the strings,  
 The loves of Mars and Cytherea sings ;

v. 301. *Skill'd in the dance* ———] I beg leave to translate Dacier's annotations upon this passage, and to offer a remark upon it. This description, says that lady, is remarkable, not because the dancers moved to the sound of the harp and the song ; for in this there is nothing extraordinary ; but in that they danced, if I may so express it, an history ; that is, by their gestures and movements they expressed what the music of the harp and voice described, and the dance was a representation of what was the subject of the poet's song. Homer only says they danced divinely, according to the obvious meaning of the words. I fancy madam Dacier would have forbore her observation, if she had reflected upon the nature of the song to which the Phæacians danced : it was an intrigue between Mars and Venus ; and they being taken in some very odd postures, she must allow that these dancers represented some very odd gestures (or movements as she expresses it) if they were now dancing an history, that is acting in their motions what was the subject of the song. But I submit to the judgment of the ladies, and shall only add, that this is an instance how a critical eye can see some things in an author, that were never intended by him ; though to do her justice, she borrowed the general remark from Eustathius.

The words *μαρμαρυγὰς ὁρῶντο ποδῶν* are very expressive, they represent the quick glancings of their feet in the dance, "*Motus pedum coruscans ;*" or

The glancing splendours as their sandals play.

v. 307. ——— *the bard alternate to the strings*  
*The loves of Mars and Cytherea sings.]*

The reader may be pleased to look back to the beginning of the book for a general vindication of this story. Scaliger in his Poetics prefers the song of Iöpas in Virgil, to this of Demodocus in Homer ; "*Demodocus deorum canit fæditates, noster Iöpas res rege dignas.*" Monsieur Dacier, in his annotations upon Aristotle's Poetics, refutes the objection. The song of Demodocus,



How the stern god, enamour'd with her charms,  
Clasp'd the gay panting goddess in his arms, 310

says he, is as well adapted to the inclinations and relish of the Phæacians, as the song of Iöpas is to queen Dido. It may indeed be questioned whether the subject of Virgil's song be well chosen, and whether the deepest points of philosophy were intirely proper to be sung to a queen and her female attendants.

The various labours of the wand'ring moon,  
And whence proceed th' eclipses of the sun,  
Th' original of men and beasts, and whence  
The rains arise, and fire their warmth dispense, &c.

DRYDEN.

Nor is Virgil more reserved than Homer: in the fourth Georgic he introduces a nymph, who in the court of the goddess Cyrenè with her nymphs about her, sings this very song of Demodocus.

To these Clymenè the sweet theft declares  
Of Mars; and Vulcan's unavailing eares;  
And all the rapes of gods, and every love  
From ancient Chaos down to youthful Jove. DRYDEN.

So that if either of the poets are to be blamed, it is certainly Virgil: but neither of them, adds that critic, are culpable: Virgil understood what a chaste queen ought to hear before strangers, and what women might say when alone among themselves: thus to the queen he sings a philosophical song, but the intrigues of Mars and Venus among nymphs when they were alone.

Plutarch vindicates this story of Homer: there is a way of teaching by mute actions, and those very fables that have given most offence, furnish us with useful contemplations: thus in the story of Mars and Venus, some have by an unnecessary violence endeavoured to reduce it to an allegory: when Venus is in conjunction with the star called Mars, they have an adulterous influence, but time, or the sun, reveals it. But the poet himself far better explains the meaning of his fable, for he teaches that light music and wanton songs debauch the manners, and incline men to an unmanly way of living in luxury and wantonness.

In short, Virgil mentions this story, Ovid translates it, Plutarch commends it, and Scaliger censures it. I will add the judgment of a late writer, Monsieur Boileau, concerning Scaliger, in his notes upon Longinus. "That proud scholar, says he, intending to erect altars to Virgil, as he expresses it, speaks of Homer too profanely; but it is in a book which he calls in part hypercritical, to shew that he transgressed the bounds of true criticism: that piece was a dishonour to Scaliger, and he fell into such gross errors, that he drew upon him the ridicule of all men of letters, and even of his own son."



Book VIII. HOMER'S ODYSSEY.

By bribes seduc'd : and how the sun, whose eye  
Views the broad heav'ns, disclos'd the lawless joy.  
Stung to the soul, indignant thro' the skies  
To his black forge vindictive Vulcan flies ;  
Arriv'd, his finewy arms incessant place 315  
Th' eternal anvil on the massy base.

A wond'rous net he labours, to betray  
The wanton lovers, as entwin'd they lay,  
Indissolubly strong ! Then instant bears  
To his immortal dome the finish'd snares. 320

Above, below, around, with art dispread,  
The sure inclosure folds the genial bed ;  
Whose texture ev'n the search of gods deceives,  
Thin as the filmy threads the spider weaves.

Then, as withdrawing from the starry bow'rs, 325

He feigns a journey to the Lemnian shores,  
His fav'rite isle ! Observant Mars descries  
His wish'd recess, and to the goddess flies ;  
He glows, he burns, the fair-hair'd queen of love  
Descends smooth gliding from the courts of Jove, 330  
Gay blooming in full charms : her hand he preßt  
With eager joy, and with a sigh addrest.

Come my belov'd ! and taste the soft delights :  
Come, to repose the genial bed invites :  
Thy absent spouse, neglectful of thy charms, 335  
Prefers his barb'rous Sintians to thy arms !

v. 336. *Prefers his barb'rous Sintians to thy arms.*] The Sintians were the inhabitants of Lemnos, by origin Thracians : Homer calls them barbarous of speech, because their language was a corruption of the Greek, Asiatic, and Thracian. But there is a concealed raillery in the expression, and Mars ridicules the ill taste of Vulcan for leaving so beautiful a goddess to visit his rude and barbarous Sintians. The poet calls Lemnos the favourite isle of Vulcan ; this alludes to the subterraneous fires frequent in that island, and he is feigned to have his forge there, as the god of fire. This is likewise the reason why he is said to fall into the island Lemnos when Jupiter threw him from heaven. Dacier.



Then, nothing loath, th' enamour'd fair he led,  
 And sunk transported on the conscious bed.  
 Down rush'd the toils, inwrapping as they lay,  
 The careless lovers in their wanton play: 340  
 In vain they strive, th' intangling snares deny  
 (Inextricably firm) the pow'r to fly:  
 Warn'd by the god who sheds the golden day,  
 Stern Vulcan homeward treads the starry way:  
 Arriv'd, he sees, he grieves, with rage he burns; 345  
 Full horrible he roars, his voice all heav'n returns:

O Jove, he cry'd, oh all ye pow'rs above;  
 See the lewd dalliance of the queen of love!  
 Me, aukward me, she scorns; and yields her charms  
 To that fair letcher, the strong god of arms. 350  
 If I am lame, that stain my natal hour  
 By fate impos'd; such me my parent bore:  
 Why was I born? See how the wanton lies!  
 O fight tormenting to an husband's eyes!  
 But yet I trust, this once ev'n Mars would fly 355  
 His fair-one's arms—he thinks her, once, too nigh.  
 But there remain, ye guilty, in my pow'r,  
 'Till Jove refunds his shameless daughter's dow'r.

v. 348. *See the lewd dalliance of the queen of love.*] The original seems to be corrupted; were it to be translated according to the present editions, it must be, “ See the ridiculous deeds of Venus.” I conceive, that few husbands who should take their spouses in such circumstances would have any great appetite to laugh; neither is such an interpretation consonant to the words immediately following ἐκ ἐπιεικλᾶ. It is therefore very probable that the verse was originally,

Δεῦθ' ἵνα ἔργ' ἀγελαστὰ καὶ ἐκ ἐπιεικλᾶ ἴδῃσθε.

“ Come ye gods, behold the sad and unsufferable deeds of Venus;” and this agrees with the tenour of Vulcan's behaviour in this comedy, who has not the least disposition to be merry with his brother deities.

v. 358. *'Till Jove refunds his shameless daughter's dow'r.*] I doubt not but this was the usage of antiquity: it has been observed that the bridegroom made presents to the father of the bride, which



Too dear I priz'd a fair enchanting face:

Beauty unchaste is beauty in disgrace.

360

Meanwhile the gods the dome of Vulcan throng,

Apollo comes, and Neptune comes along,

With these gay Hermes trod the starry plain;

But modesty with-held the goddesses-train.

All heav'n beholds, imprison'd as they lie,

365

And unextinguish'd laughter shakes the sky.

Then mutual, thus they spoke: Behold on wrong

Swift vengeance waits; and art subdues the strong!

were called *ἔνδα*; and if she was afterwards false to his bed, this dower was restored by the father to the husband. Besides this restitution, there seems a pecuniary mulct to have been paid, as appears evident from what follows:

————— the god of arms

Must pay the penalty for lawless charms.

Homer in this, as in many other places, seems to allude to the laws of Athens, where death was the punishment of adultery. Pausanias relates, that Draco the Athenian lawgiver granted impunity to any person that took revenge upon an adulterer. Such also was the institution of Solon; “If any one seize an adulterer, let him use him as he pleases;” *εἰάν τις μοιχὸν λάβῃ, ὅτι αὐτὸν βαλῆναι χρῆσθαι*. And thus Eratosthenes answered a person who begged his life after he had injured his bed, *ἐκ ἐγὼ (εἰ ἀποκτενῶ, ἀλλ’ ὁ τῆς πόλεως νόμος)*, “It is not I who slay thee, but the law of thy country.” But still it was in the power of the injured person to take a pecuniary mulct by way of atonement: for thus the same Eratosthenes speaks in Lyfias, *ἡνίκά τις καὶ ἐκέλευε μὴ αὐτὸν κτείνειν, ἀλλ’ ἀργύριον πρᾶξασθαι*, “He entreated me not to take his life, but exact a sum of money.” Nay, such penalties were allowed by way of commutation for greater crimes than adultery, as in the case of murder, *Iliad ix.*

————— If a brother bleed,

On just atonement, we remit the deed:

A fire the slaughter of his son forgives;

The price of blood discharg'd, the murd'rer lives.

v. 367. ————— Behold on wrong

Swift vengeance waits —————]

Plutarch in his dissertation upon reading the poets, quotes this as an instance of Homer's judgment, in closing a ludicrous scene with decency and instruction. He artfully inserts a sentence by which



Dwells there a god on all th' Olympian brow  
 More swift than Mars, and more than Vulcan slow?  
 Yet Vulcan conquers, and the god of arms 371  
 Must pay the penalty for lawless charms.

Thus serious they: but he who gilds the skies,  
 The gay Apollo, thus to Hermes cries.  
 Wou'dst thou enchain'd like Mars, oh Hermes, lie, 375  
 And bear the shame like Mars, to share the joy?

O envy'd shame! (the smiling youth rejoin'd)  
 Add thrice the chains, and thrice more firmly bind;  
 Gaze all ye gods, and ev'ry goddess gaze,  
 Yet eager would I bless the sweet disgrace. 380

Loud laugh the rest, ev'n Neptune laughs aloud,  
 Yet sues importunate to loose the god:  
 And free, he cries, oh Vulcan! free from shame  
 Thy captives; I ensure the penal claim.

Will Neptune (Vulcan then) the faithless trust? 385  
 He suffers who gives surety for th' unjust:

he discovers his own judgment, and lets the reader into the moral of his fables; by this conduct he makes even the representation of evil actions useful, by shewing the shame and detriment they draw upon those who are guilty of them.

v. 382. *Neptune sues to loose the god.*] It may be asked why Neptune in particular interests himself in the deliverance of Mars, rather than the other gods? Dacier confesses she can find no reason for it; but Eustathius is of opinion, that Homer ascribes it to that god out of decency, and deference to his superiour majesty and eminence amongst the other deities: it is suitable to the character of that most ancient, and consequently honourable god, to interrupt such an indecent scene of mirth, which is not so becoming his personage, as those more youthful deities Apollo and Mercury. Besides, it agrees well with Neptune's gravity to be the first who is mindful of friendship; so that what is here said of Neptune is not accidental, but spoken judiciously by the poet in honour of that deity.

v. 386. *He suffers who gives surety for th' unjust.*] This verse is very obscure, and made still more obscure by the explanations of critics. Some think it implies, that it is wicked to be surety for a wicked person; and therefore Neptune should not give his promise for Mars thus taken in adultery. Some take it generally; suretyship is detrimental, and it is the lot of unhappy men to be



But say, if that lewd scandal of the sky  
 To liberty restor'd, perfidious fly;  
 Say, wilt thou bear the mulct? He instant cries,  
 The mulct I bear, if Mars perfidious flies. 390

To whom appeas'd: No more I urge delay;  
 When Neptune sues, my part is to obey.  
 Then to his snares his force the god applies;  
 They burst; and Mars to Thrace indignant flies:  
 To the soft Cyprian shores the goddess moves, 395  
 To visit Paphos and her blooming groves,  
 Where to the pow'r an hundred altars rise,  
 And breathing odours scent the balmy skies:  
 Conceal'd she bathes in consecrated bow'rs,  
 The graces unguents shed, ambrosial show'rs, 400

sureties; the words then are to be construed in the following order, *δειλαί τοι ἐσγύαι, καὶ δειλῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐσγυάασθαι*. "Sponsones sunt infelices, & hominum est infeliciū sponsones dare." Others understand it very differently, viz. to imply that the sureties of men of inferiour condition, should be to men of inferiour condition; then the sentence will bear this import: if Mars, says Vulcan, refuses to discharge the penalty, how shall I compel Neptune to pay it, who is so greatly my superiour? And therefore adds by way of sentence, that the sponsor ought to be of the same station with the person to whom he become surety; or in Latin, "*Simplicium hominum simplices esse debent sponsores*." I have followed Plutarch, who in his banquet of the seven wise men, explains it to signify that it is dangerous to be surety for a wicked person, according to the ancient sentence, *ἐσγύα παρὰ δ' ἄτᾱ*. "Loss follows suretyship." Agreeably to the opinion of a much wiser person, "He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it; and he that hateth suretyship is sure." Prov. xi. 15.

v. 394. ——— *Mars to Thrace indignant flies:*

*To the soft Cyprian shores the goddess moves.]*

There is a reason for this particularity: the Thracians were a warlike people: the poet therefore sends the god of war thither: and the people of Cyprus being effeminate, and addicted to love and pleasures, he feigns the recess of the goddess of love to have been in that island. it is further observable, that he barely mentions the retreat of Mars, but dwells more largely upon the story of Venus. The reason is, the Phæacians had no delight in the god of war, but the soft description of Venus better suited with their inclinations. Eustathius.



Unguent that charm the gods! she last assumes  
Her wond'rous robes; and full the goddess blooms.

Thus sung the bard: Ulysses hears with joy,  
And loud applauses rend the vaulted sky.

Then to the sports his sons the king commands, 405  
Each blooming youth before the monarch stands,  
In dance unmatch'd! A wond'rous ball is brought,  
(The work of Polybus, divinely wrought)  
This youth with strength enormous bids it fly,  
And bending backward whirls it to the sky; 410  
His brother springing with an active bound,  
At distance intercepts it from the ground:  
The ball dismiss'd, in dance they skim the strand,  
Turn and return, and scarce imprint the sand.  
Th' assembly gazes with astonish'd eyes, 415  
And sends in shouts applauses to the skies.

Then thus Ulysses: Happy king, whose name  
The brightest shines in all the rolls of fame:  
In subjects happy! with surprise I gaze; 419  
Thy praise was just; their skill transcends thy praise.

v. 410. *And bending backward whirls it to the sky.*] This is a literal translation of ἰδνωθεὶς ὀπίσσω; and it gives us a lively image of a person in the act of throwing towards the skies. Eustathius is most learnedly trifling about this exercise of the ball, which was called οὐρανία, or “aërial;” it was a kind of dance, and while they sprung from the ground to catch the ball, they played with their feet in the air after the manner of dancers. He reckons up several other exercises at the ball, ἀπόρραξις, φαίνινδα, ἐπίσκυρσις, and δερμαῦστροις; and explains them all largely. Homer seems to oppose this aërial dance to the common one, ποτὶ χθονὶ, or “on the ground,” which appears to be added to make an evident distinction between the sports; otherwise it is unnecessary; and to dance upon the ground is implied in ὠρχεῖσθην, for how should a dance be performed but upon the ground.

v. 420. *Thy praise was just* ———] The original says, You promised that your subjects were excellent dancers, ἀπείλησας, that is, “threatened:” Minans is used in the same sense by the Latins, as Dacier observes; thus Horace,

“Multa & præclara minantem.”

Eustathius remarks, that the address of Ulysses is very artful, he calls it a seasonable flattery: in reality to excel in dancing, is but



Pleas'd with his peoples fame the monarch hears,  
 And thus benevolent accosts the peers.  
 Since wisdom's sacred guidance he pursues,  
 Give to the stranger-guest a stranger's dues :  
 Twelve princes in our realm dominion share, 425  
 O'r whom supreme, imperial pow'r I bear :  
 Bring gold, a pledge of love ; a talent bring,  
 A vest, a robe, and imitate your king :  
 Be swift to give ; that he this night may share  
 The social feast of joy, with joy sincere. 430  
 And thou, Euryalus, redeem thy wrong :  
 A gen'rous heart repairs a slanderous tongue.  
 Th' assenting peers, obedient to the king,  
 In haste their heralds send the gifts to bring.  
 Then thus Euryalus : O prince, whose sway 435  
 Rules this blest realm, repentant I obey !  
 Be his this sword, whose blade of brass displays  
 A ruddy gleam ; whose hilt, a silver blaze ;  
 Whose ivory sheath inwrought with curious pride,  
 Adds graceful terrour to the wearer's side. 440  
 He said ; and to his hand the sword consign'd ;  
 And if, he cry'd, my words affect thy mind,  
 Far from thy mind those words, ye whirlwinds bear,  
 And scatter them, ye storms, in empty air ! 444  
 Crown, oh ye heav'ns, with joy his peaceful hours,  
 And grant him to his spouse and native shores !  
 And blest be thou, my friend, Ulysses cries,  
 Crown him with ev'ry joy, ye fav'ring skies ;  
 To thy calm hours continu'd peace afford,  
 And never, never may'st thou want this sword ! 450

to excel in trifles, but in the opinion of Alcinous it was a most noble qualification : Ulysses therefore pleases his vanity by adapting his praise to his notions ; and that which would have been an affront in some nations, is esteemed as the highest compliment by Alcinous.

v. 450. *And never, never may'st thou want this sword* ] It can scarce be imagined how greatly this beautiful passage is misrepre-



He said, and o'er his shoulder flung the blade.  
 Now o'er the earth ascends the ev'ning shade:  
 The precious gifts th' illustrious heralds bear,  
 And to the court th' embody'd peers repair.  
 Before the queen Alcinous' sons unfold  
 The vests, the robes, and heaps of shining gold;  
 Then to the radiant thrones they move in state:  
 Aloft, the king in pomp imperial sat.

455

Thence to the queen. O partner of our reign,  
 O sole belov'd! command thy menial train  
 A polish'd chest and stately robes to bear,  
 And healing waters for the bath prepare:  
 That bath'd, our guest may bid his sorrows cease,  
 Hear the sweet song, and taste the feast in peace.  
 A bowl that flames with gold, of wond'rous frame,  
 Ourself we give, memorial of our name:  
 To raise in off'rings to almighty Jove,  
 And ev'ry god that tread the courts above.

460

466

Instant the queen, observant of the king,  
 Commands her train a spacious vase to bring,  
 The spacious vase with ample streams suffice,  
 Heap high the wood, and bid the flames arise.  
 The flames climb round it with a fierce embrace,  
 The fuming waters bubble o'er the blaze.  
 Herself the chest prepares: in order roll'd  
 The robes, the vests are rang'd, and heaps of gold:

470

475

sented by Eustathius. He would have it to imply, "May I never  
 "want this sword," taking *ταῖς* adverbially: the presents of ene-  
 mies were reckoned fatal, Ulysses therefore to avert the omen,  
 prays that he may never have occasion to have recourse to this  
 sword of Euryalus, but keep it amongst his treasures as a testi-  
 mony of this reconciliation. This appears to be a very forced in-  
 terpretation, and disagreeable to the general import of the rest of  
 the sentence; he addresses to Euryalus, to whom then can this  
 compliment be naturally paid but to Euryalus? "Thou hast  
 "given me a sword, says he, may thy days be so peaceable as  
 "never to want it!" This is an instance of the polite address,  
 and the forgiving temper, of Ulysses.



And adding a rich dress inwrought with art,  
 A gift expressive of her bounteous heart,  
 Thus spoke to Ithacus : To guard with bands  
 Insolvable these gifts, thy care demands : 480  
 Lest, in thy slumbers on the wat'ry main,  
 The hand of rapine make our bounty vain.

Then bending with full force, around he roll'd  
 A labyrinth of bands in fold on fold,  
 Clos'd with Circæan art. A train attends 485  
 Around the bath : the bath the king ascends :  
 (Untasted joy, since that disastrous hour,  
 He sail'd ill-fated from Calypso's bow'r)  
 Where, happy as the gods that range the sky,  
 He feasted ev'ry sense, with ev'ry joy. 490  
 He bathes ; the damsels with officious toil,  
 Shed sweets, shed unguents, in a show'r of oil :  
 Then o'er his limbs a gorgeous robe he spreads,  
 And to the feast magnificently treads.

v. 485. *Clos'd with Circæan art.* —] Such passages as these have more of nature than art, and are too narrative, and different from modern ways of speaking, to be capable of much ornament in poetry. Eustathius observes that keys were not in use in these ages, but were afterwards invented by the Lacedæmonians; but they used to bind their carriages with intricate knots. Thus the Gordian knot was famous in antiquity. And this knot of Ulysses became a proverb, to express any insolvable difficulty, ὁ τῆς ὀδυσσεύος δεσμὸς : this is the reason why he is said to have learned it from Circe; it was of great esteem amongst the ancients, and not being capable to be untied by human art, the invention of it is ascribed, not to a man, but to a goddess.

A poet would now appear ridiculous if he should introduce a goddess only to teach a hero such an art, as to tie a knot with intricacy : but we must not judge of what has been, from what now is; customs and arts are never at a stay, and consequently the ideas of customs and arts are as changeable as those arts and customs : this knot in all probability was in as high estimation formerly, as the finest watch-work or machines are at this day; and were a person famed for an uncommon skill in such works, it would be no absurdity in the language of poetry, to ascribe his knowledge in them to the assistance of a deity.



Full where the dome its shining valves expands, 495  
 Nauficaa blooming as a goddess stands,  
 With wond'ring eyes the hero she survey'd,  
 And graceful thus began the royal maid.

Hail god-like stranger! and when heav'n restores  
 To thy fond wish thy long-expected shores, 500  
 This ever grateful in remembrance bear,  
 To me thou ow'st, to me, the vital air.

O royal maid, Ulysses straight returns,  
 Whose worth the splendours of thy race adorns,  
 So may dread Jove (whose arm in vengeance forms 505  
 The writhen bolt, and blackens heav'n with storms,)  
 Restore me safe, thro' weary wand'rings tost,  
 To my dear country's ever pleasing coast,  
 As while the spirit in this bosom glows,  
 To thee, my goddess, I address my vows; 510  
 My life, thy gift I boast! He said, and sat,  
 Fast by Alcinous on a throne of state.

Now each partakes the feast, the wine prepares,  
 Portions the food, and each his portion shares.  
 The bard an herald guides: the gazing throng 515  
 Pay low obeisance as he moves along:  
 Beneath a sculptur'd arch he sits enthron'd,  
 The peers encircling form an awful round.

v. 510. *To thee, my goddess, I address my vows.*] This may seem an extravagant compliment, especially in the mouth of the wise Ulysses, and rather profane than polite. Dacier commends it as the highest piece of address and gallantry; but perhaps it may want explication to reconcile it to decency. Ulysses only speaks comparatively, and with relation to that one action of her saving his life: "As therefore, says he, I owe my thanks to the heavens for giving me life originally, so I ought to pay my thanks to thee for preserving it; thou hast been to me as a deity. To preserve a life, is in one sense to give it." If this appears not to soften the expression sufficiently, it may be ascribed to an overflow of gratitude in the generous disposition of Ulysses; he is so touched with the memory of her benevolence and protection, that his soul labours for an expression great enough to represent it, and no wonder if in this struggle of thought, his words fly out into an excessive but laudable boldness.



Then from the chine, Ulysses carves with art  
Delicious food, an honorary part;

520

This, let the master of the lyre receive,  
A pledge of love! 'tis all a wretch can give.

Lives there a man beneath the spacious skies,  
Who sacred honours to the bard denies?

The muse the bard inspires, exalts his mind;

525

The muse indulgent loves th' harmonious kind:

The herald to his hand the charge conveys,  
Not fond of flatt'ry, nor unpleas'd with praise.

When now the rage of hunger was allay'd,  
Thus to the lyrist wife Ulysses said,

530

O more than man! thy soul the muse inspires,  
Or Phœbus animates with all his fires:

v. 519. — *From the chine Ulysses carves with art.*] Were this literally to be translated, it would be that Ulysses cut a piece from the chine of the white-toothed boar, round which there was much fat. This looks like burlesque to a person unacquainted with the usages of antiquity: but it was the highest honour that could be paid to Demodocus. The greatest heroes in the Iliad are thus rewarded after victory, and it was esteemed an equivalent for all dangers. So that what Ulysses here offers to the poet, is offered out of a particular regard and honour to his poetry.

v. 531. — *Thy soul the muse inspires,  
Or Phœbus animates with all his fires.*]

Ulysses here ascribes the songs of Demodocus to immediate inspiration; and Apollo is made the patron of the poets, as Eustathius observes, because he is the god of prophecy. He adds, that Homer here again represents himself in the person of Demodocus: it is he who wrote the war of Troy with as much faithfulness, as if he had been present at it; it is he who had little or no assistance from former relations of that story, and consequently receives it from Apollo and the muses. This is a secret but artful insinuation that we are not to look upon the Iliad as all fiction and fable, but in general as a real history, related with as much certainty as if the poet had been present at those memorable actions.

Plutarch in his chapter of reading poems admires the conduct of Homer with relation to Ulysses: he diverts Demodocus from idle fables, and gives him a noble theme, the destruction of Troy. Such subjects suit well with the sage character of Ulysses. It is for the same reason that he here passes over in silence the amour of Mars and Venus, and commends the song at the beginning of this book,



For who by Phœbus uninform'd, could know  
 The woe of Greece, and sing so well the woe?  
 Just to the tale, as present at the fray, 535  
 Or taught the labours of the dreadful day!

The song recalls past horrors to my eyes,  
 And bids proud Ilion from her ashes rise.  
 Once more harmonious strike the sounding string,  
 Th' Epæan fabric, fram'd by Pallas, sing: 540

How stern Ulysses, furious to destroy,  
 With latent heroes sack'd imperial Troy.  
 If faithful thou record the tale of fame,  
 The god himself inspires thy breast with flame:  
 And mine shall be the task, henceforth to raise 545  
 In ev'ry land, the monument of praise.

Full of the god he rais'd his lofty strain,  
 How the Greeks rush'd tumultuous to the main:  
 How blazing tents illumin'd half the skies,  
 While from the shores the winged navy flies: 550  
 How ev'n in Ilion's walls, in deathful bands,  
 Came the stern Greeks by Troy's assisting hands:  
 All Troy up-heav'd the steed; of diff'ring mind,  
 Various the Trojans counsell'd; part consign'd

concerning the contention of the worthies before Troy: an instruction, what songs a wise man ought to hear, and that poets should recite nothing but what may be heard by a wise man.

v. 554. *Various the Trojans counsell'd* —] It is observable that the poet gives us only the heads of this song, and though he had an opportunity to expatiate and introduce a variety of noble images, by painting the fall of Troy, yet this being foreign to his story, he judiciously restrains his fancy, and passes on to the more immediate actions of the Odyssey. Virgil, lib. ii. of his *Æneis*, has translated these verses:

“ Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus:  
 “ At Capys, & quorum melior sententia menti,  
 “ Aut Pelago Danaum insidias suspectaque dona  
 “ Præcipitare jubent, subjectisque urere flammis;  
 “ Aut terebrare cavas uteri & tentare latebras.”

Scaliger prefers these before those of Homer, and says that Homer trifles in describing so particularly the divisions of the Trojan coun-



The monster to the sword, part sentence gave 555  
 To plunge it headlong in the whelming wave;  
 Th' unwise award to lodge it in the tow'rs,  
 An off'ring sacred to th' immortal pow'rs:  
 Th' unwise prevail, they lodge it in the walls,  
 And by the gods decree proud Ilion falls; 560  
 Destruction enters in the treach'rous wood,  
 And vengeful slaughter, fierce for human blood.

He sung the Greeks stern-issuing from the steed,  
 How Ilion burns, how all her fathers bleed:  
 How to thy dome, Deiphobus! ascends 565  
 The Spartan king; how Ithacus attends,  
 (Horrid as Mars) and how with dire alarms  
 He fights, subdues: for Pallas strings his arms.

Thus while he sung, Ulysses' griefs renew,  
 Tears bathe his cheeks, and tears the ground bedew:  
 As some fond matron views in mortal fight 571  
 Her husband falling in his country's right:

sels: that Virgil chuses to burn the horse, rather than describe it as thrown from the rocks: for how should the Trojans raise it thither? Such objections are scarce worthy of a serious answer, for it is no difficulty to imagine that the same men who heaved this machine into Troy, should be able to raise it upon a rock: and as for the former objection, Virgil recites almost the same divisions in council as Homer, nay borrows them, with little variation.

Aristotle observes the great art of Homer, in naturally bringing about the discovery of Ulysses to Alcinous by this song. He calls this a remembrance, that is, when a present object stirs up a past image in the memory, as a picture recalls the figure of an absent friend: thus Ulysses hearing Demodocus sing to the harp his former hardships, breaks out into tears, and these tears bring about his discovery.

v. 571. *As some fond matron* ———] This is undoubtedly a very moving and beautiful comparison; but it may be asked if it be proper to compare so great a hero as Ulysses to a woman, the weakness of whose sex justifies her tears? Besides she appears to have a sufficient cause for her sorrows, as being under the greatest calamities; but why should Ulysses weep? Nothing but his valour and success is recorded, and why should this be an occasion of sorrow? Eustathius replies, that they who think that Ulysses



Frantic thro' clashing swords she runs, she flies,  
 As ghastly pale he groans, and faints, and dies;  
 Close to his breast she grovels on the ground, 575  
 And bathes with floods of tears the gaping wound;  
 She cries, she shrieks; the fierce insulting foe  
 Relentless mocks her violence of woe:  
 To chains condemn'd, as wildly she deplores;  
 A widow, and a slave on foreign shores. 580

So from the sluices of Ulysses' eyes  
 Fast fell the tears, and sighs succeeded sighs:  
 Conceal'd he griev'd: the king observ'd alone  
 The silent tear, and heard the secret groan:  
 Then to the bard aloud: O cease to sing, 585  
 Dumb be thy voice, and mute the tuneful string:  
 'To ev'ry note his tears responsive flow,  
 And his great heart heaves with tumultuous woe;  
 Thy lay too deeply moves: then cease the lay,  
 And o'er the banquet ev'ry heart be gay: 590  
 This social right demands: for him the sails  
 Floating in air, invite th' impelling gales:  
 His are the gifts of love: the wise and good  
 Receive the stranger as a brother's blood.

But, friend, discover faithful what I crave, 595  
 Artful concealment ill becomes the brave:

is compared to the matron, mistake the point of the comparison: whereas the tears alone of Ulysses are intended to be compared to the tears of the matron. It is the sorrow of the two persons, not the persons themselves, that is represented in the comparison. But there appears no sufficient cause for the tears of Ulysses; this objection would not have been made, if the subject of the song had been considered; it sets before his eyes all the calamities of a long war, all the scenes of slaughter of friends and enemies that he had beheld in it: it is also to be remembered, that we have only the abridgment of the song, and yet we see spectacles of horror, blood, and commiseration. Tears discover a tender, not an abject spirit. Achilles is not less a hero for weeping over the ashes of Patroclus, nor Ulysses for lamenting the calamities and deaths of thousands of his friends.



Say what thy birth, and what the name you bore,  
 Impos'd by parents in the natal hour?  
 (For from the natal hour distinctive names,  
 One common right, the great and lowly claims :) 600  
 Say from what city, from what regions tost,  
 And what inhabitants those regions boast?  
 So shalt thou instant reach the realm assign'd,  
 In wond'rous ships self-mov'd, instinct with mind;  
 No helm secures their course, no pilot guides; 605  
 Like man intelligent, they plough the tides,  
 Conscious of every coast, and every bay,  
 That lies beneath the sun's all-seeing ray;  
 Tho' clouds and darkness veil th' encumber'd sky,  
 Fearless thro' darkness and thro' clouds they fly: 610  
 Tho' tempests rage, tho' rolls the swelling main,  
 The seas may roll, the tempests rage in vain;  
 Ev'n the stern god that o'er the waves presides,  
 Safe as they pass, and safe repass the tides,

v. 604. *In wond'rous ships self-mov'd, instinct with mind.*] There is not a passage that more outrages all the rules of credibility than the description of these ships of Alcinous. The poet inserts these wonders only to shew the great dexterity of the Phæacians in navigation; and indeed it was necessary to be very full in the description of their skill, who were to convey Ulysses home in despite of the very god of the ocean. It is for the same reason that they are described as sailing almost invisibly, to escape the notice of that god. Antiquity animated every thing in poetry; thus Argo is said to have had a mast made of Dodonæan oak, endued with the faculty of speech. But this is defending one absurdity, by instancing in a fable equally absurd; all that can be said in defence of it is, that such extravagant fables were believed, at least by the vulgar, in former ages; and consequently might be introduced without blame in poetry; if so, by whom could a boast of this nature be better made, than by a vain Phæacian? Besides these extravagancies let Ulysses into the humour of the Phæacians, and in the following books he adapts his story to it, and returns fable for fable. It must likewise certainly be a great encouragement to Ulysses to find himself in such hands as could so easily restore him to his country: for it was natural to conclude, that though Alcinous was guilty of great amplification, yet that his subjects were very expert navigators.



With fury burns; while careless they convey 615  
Promiscuous every guest to every bay.

These ears have heard my royal fire disclose  
A dreadful story big with future woes,  
How Neptune rag'd, and how, by his command,  
Firm rooted in a surge a ship should stand 620  
A monument of wrath: how mound on mound  
Should bury these proud tow'rs beneath the ground.

v. 619. ————— *bow, by his command,*  
*Firm rooted in the surge a ship should stand.]*

The antients, as Eustathius observes, mark these verses with an obelisk and asterism. The obelisk shewed that they judged what relates to the oracle was misplaced, the asterism denoted that they thought the verses very beautiful. For they thought it not probable that Alcinous would have called to memory this prediction and the menace of Neptune, and yet persisted to conduct to his own country the enemy of that deity: whereas if this oracle be supposed to be forgotten by Alcinous (as it will, if these verses be taken away) then there will be an appearance of truth, that he who was a friend to all strangers, should be persuaded to land so great and worthy a hero as Ulysses in his own dominions, and therefore they reject them to the thirteenth of the Odyssey. But, as Eustathius observes, Alcinous immediately subjoins,

But this the gods may frustrate or fulfill,  
As suits the purpose of th' eternal will.

And therefore the verses may be very proper in this book, for Alcinous believes that the gods might be prevailed upon not to fulfill this denunciation. It has been likewise remarked that the conduct of Alcinous is very justifiable: the Phæacians had been warned by an oracle, that an evil threatened them for the care they should shew to a stranger: yet they forbear not to perform an act of piety to Ulysses, being persuaded that men ought to do their duty, and trust the issue to the goodness of the gods. This will seem to be more probable, if we remember Alcinous is ignorant that Ulysses is the person intended by the prediction, so that he is not guilty of a voluntary opposition to the gods, but really acts with piety in assisting his guest, and only complies with the common laws of hospitality.

It is but a conjecture, yet it is not without probability, that there was a rock which looked like a vessel, in the entrance of the haven of the Phæacians, the fable may be built upon this foundation, and because it was environed by the ocean, the transformation might be ascribed to the god of it.

v. 621. ————— *bow mound on mound*  
*Should bury these proud tow'rs beneath the ground.]*



But this the gods may frustrate or fulfill,  
 As suits the purpose of th' eternal will.  
 But say thro' what waste regions hast thou stray'd, 625  
 What customs noted, and what coasts survey'd?  
 Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms,  
 Or men, whose bosom tender pity warms?  
 Say why the fate of Troy awak'd thy cares,  
 Why heav'd thy bosom, and why flow'd thy tears? 630  
 Just are the ways of heav'n: from heav'n proceed  
 The woes of man; heav'n doom'd the Greeks to bleed,  
 A theme of future song! Say then if slain  
 Some dear-lov'd brother press'd the Phrygian plain?  
 Or bled some friend, who bore a brother's part, 635  
 And claim'd by merit, not by blood, the heart?

The Greek word is ἀμφικαλύψειν, which does not necessarily imply that the city should be buried actually, but that a mountain should surround it, or cover it round; and in the thirteenth book we find that when the ship was transformed into a rock, the city continues out of danger. Eustathius is fully of opinion, that the city was threatened to be overwhelmed by a mountain; the poet, says he, invents this fiction to prevent posterity from searching after this isle of the Phæacians, and to preserve his story from detection of falsification; after the same manner as he introduces Neptune and the rivers of Troy, bearing away the wall which the Greeks had raised as a fortification before their navy. But Dacier in the omissions which she inserts at the end of the second volume of her *Odyssey*, is of a contrary opinion, for the mountain is not said to cover the city, but to threaten to cover it: as appears from the thirteenth book of the *Odyssey*, where Alcinous commands a sacrifice to the gods to avert the execution of this denunciation.

But the difference in reality is small, the city is equally threatened to be buried, as the vessel to be transformed; and therefore Alcinous might pronounce the same fate to both, since both were threatened equally by the prediction: it was indeed impossible for him to speak after any other manner, for he only repeats the words of the oracle, and cannot foresee that the sacrifice of the Phæacians would appease the anger of Neptune.

v. 635. *Or bled some friend, who bore a brother's part,  
 And claim'd by merit, not by blood, the heart?*]

This excellent sentence of Homer at once guides us in the choice, and instructs us in the regard, that is to be paid to the person of a friend. If it be lawful to judge of a man from his



writings, Homer had a soul susceptible of real friendship, and was a lover of sincerity. It would be endless to take notice of every casual instruction inserted in the *Odyssey*; but such sentences shew Homer to have been a man of an amiable character as well as excellent in poetry: the great abhorrence he had of lies cannot be more strongly exprest than in those two passages of the ninth *Iliad*, and in the fourteenth *Odyssey*: in the first of which he makes the man of the greatest soul, Achilles, bear testimony to his aversion of them; and in the latter declares, that "the poorest man, though compelled by the utmost necessity, ought not to stoop to such a practice." In this place he shews that worth creates a kind of relation, and that we are to look upon a worthy friend as a brother.

This book takes up the whole thirty third day, and part of the evening: for the council opens in the morning, and at sun-setting the Phæacians return to the palace from the games; after which Ulysses bathes and sups, and spends some time of the evening in discoursing, and hearing the songs of Demodocus. Then Alcinous requests him to relate his own story, which he begins in the next book, and continues it through the four subsequent books of the *Odyssey*.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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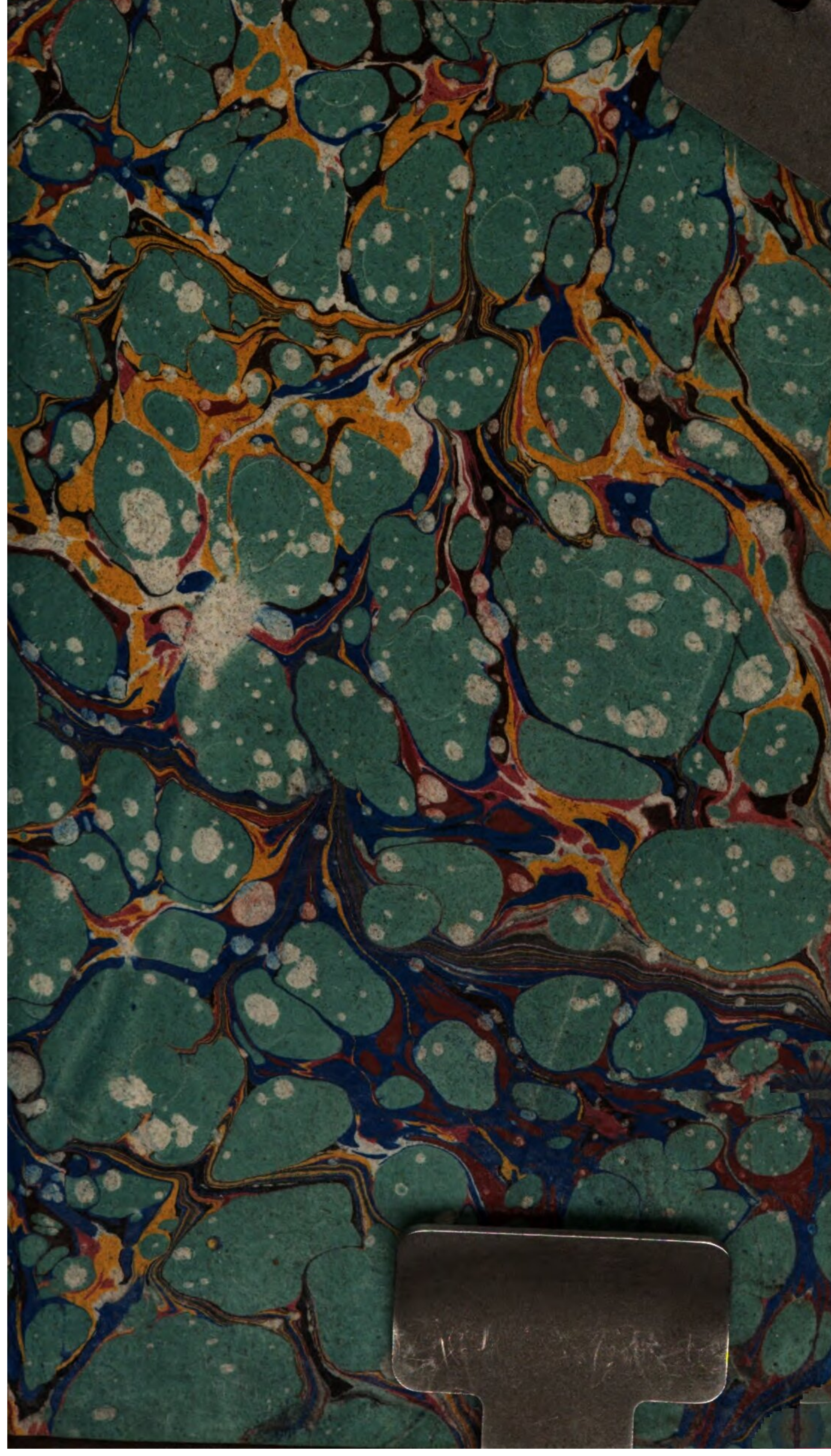


















Homerus, ca. v8. Jh.

The Odyssey

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